

The

Divine

Challenge

THOMAS M. DONN

**This book is a metrical
paraphrase of the Book
of Job written in four-
line stanzas of anapaestic
tetrameters in rhyme.**

THE DIVINE CHALLENGE

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being a metrical paraphrase of the
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in four-line stanzas of
anapaestic tetrameters in rhyme

BY
THOMAS M. DONN

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To my dear friends

JOHN ALEXANDER GEMMELL

AND

CONSTANCE MARJORY HEDDELL GEMMELL

*in grateful recognition and appreciation of their
published poetry and of the encouragement which they
gave me to write this book.*

" Blessings be with them and eternal praise
Who gave us nobler loves and nobler cares,
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays."

— WORDSWORTH : Personal Talk, St. 4.

" Poets are all who love, who feel great truths,
And tell them : and the truth of truths is love."

— PHILIP JAMES BAILEY : Festus.

" Poetry is life itself and everything around and above it."

— LANDOR : Pericles and Aspasia, 72.

" The Artist sees, and of the beauty drinks,
Enraptured, till the night creeps o'er the sky;
And in the distant West the daylight sinks,
But in his soul a burning light shines high,

The seeing eye, the understanding mind,
From whom is Beauty not in banishment,
Shall rule the World, for only they shall find
True life, who love, and know divine content."

— JOHN ALEXANDER GEMMELL : ' Appreciation '
in " Through Life's Windows," p. 39.

" She sings of seas with silver tides,
Of hills with scarfs of wreathed mist,
Of trembling roses near to birth,
By dewfall gently kiss'd.
She sings of youth, of love and joy,
Of a tenderness rare and deep
..... "

— CONSTANCE MARJORY HEDDELL GEMMELL :
' Roseilean ' in " Through English Windows," p. 64

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	xi
BIBLIOGRAPHY	xiii
INTRODUCTION	xv
BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF JOB	xix
THE DIVINE CHALLENGE:—	
The Prologue Chapters 1 - 2)	3
Part One („ 3 - 14)	11
Part Two („ 15 - 21)	43
Part Three („ 22 - 31)	65
Part Four („ 32 - 37)	89
Part Five („ 38 - 42 : 6)	105
Epilogue („ 42 : 7 - 17)	119

PREFACE

This metrical paraphrase of the Book of Job was written during 1961 and now appears in print at the request of a number of friends who have expressed their appreciation of it. I forbear to quote their all too kind words. The question may be asked "Is not a good modern prose translation of the book, such as that of the R.S.V. or of Moffatt, fully adequate?" The answer must be "Yes, so far as the prosaic meaning of the text is concerned but more is necessary than to grasp that meaning." In Hebrew the book is a poem — all of it except the Prologue and Epilogue. "The theory that the poem was written wholly in four-line stanzas is not improbable though in a good many passages it is difficult to establish" (Strahan, *op. cit.* p. 27). This fact of the poetic character of the book is of fundamental importance to the correct interpretation and appreciation of the book as I indicate in the introduction which follows.

The footnotes are not intended to be any substitute for a commentary on the book but simply to elucidate a number of difficult passages and point to literary parallels.

It is greatly to be desired that eventually a great poetic genius will produce a great poetic version of this ancient masterpiece. This desideratum in English Literature is due to the very formidable difficulties which have to be overcome and to which I refer in the introduction.

I offer my cordial thanks to the printers for their very careful work and kind interest.

THOMAS MACKENZIE DONN.

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INTRODUCTION

It has been said truly that "it is a feeble light which the Authorised Version sheds upon this poem" ⁽¹⁾ and that "more than any other book in the Hebrew Canon, it needs bringing near to the modern reader" ⁽²⁾. No doubt J. A. Froude was alluding to these facts when he wrote that "the Book of Job will one day, perhaps, when it is allowed stand on its own merits, be seen towering up alone, far above all the poetry of the world" ⁽³⁾.

I believe that a metrical paraphrase of the Book of Job serves two useful purposes; it tends to safeguard the book from incorrect and misapplied interpretations and it promotes the literary appreciation of the book. Two illustrations can be given. Coleridge has rebuked preachers for abusing texts from this book in their sermons ⁽⁴⁾. It has been rightly observed that "no translation of a poem can ever do it justice; but even approximate justice is impossible where cadence and rhythm and all that make it a poem are deliberately ignored" ⁽⁵⁾.

As the commentators have shown, there are many difficulties involved: there are dislocated passages, interpolations, and later additions. Redactors have obviously been at work to modify Job's attack on the traditional doctrine of retribution as held by his "miserable comforters."

Many distinguished authors have praised the Book of Job. "The greatest poem of ancient and modern times" (Tennyson); "One of the grandest things ever written with pen . . . a noble book; all men's book . . . there is nothing, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit" (Carlyle); "Magnificent and sublime as no other book of Scripture" (Luther); "One of the most wonderful products of the human spirit, belonging to the literature of the world like Dante's *Divina*

(1) T. K. CHEYNE: 'Job and Solomon' quoted by Strahan

(2) T. K. CHEYNE: 'Job and Solomon' quoted by J. E. McFadyen.

(3) *SHORT STUDIES*, Vol. 1, p. 285.

(4) *AIDS TO REFLECTION*: Bohn's popular Library, p. 307.

(5) J. E. McFadyen: *The Wisdom Books in Modern Speech*, p. 7.

Commedia and Goethe's *Faust* and, like both these mighty all-embracing works, striving to explain the deepest secrets of existence, to solve the ultimate mysteries of life" (Cornhill).

The long discussion among Old Testament scholars as to whether the Book of Job is a didactic, epic or dramatic poem has resulted in the conclusion that it is in a class by itself (*sui generis*) so far as its literary form is concerned. It is a great poem describing the pilgrimage of a righteous and devout soul through bodily and mental pain, through adversity, bereavement and calumny, through humiliation and agony of faith, to final light and peace. The ancient world has produced no greater piece of literature of psychological value. It is an abiding treasure of the literature of mankind in that it deals with a permanent problem of the human soul, a problem upon which only the Gospel of Christ and Him crucified can shed sufficient light to deliver us from the utter despair of agnosticism. "This book" wrote Mark Rutherford, "in a sense is terribly modern, for this is a question which is continually but resultlessly asked by us all" ("Deliverance" p. 138).

It may well be that the ancient poet had suffered greatly himself and had encountered the false doctrine of Job's "miserable comforters."

" most wretched men
Are cradled into poetry by wrong;
They learn in suffering what they teach in song."

Shelley, who wrote these lines, "meditated a tragedy on the subject ("Job"), which would have been, probably, a very daring and powerful accomodation of Job to his own unhappy notions" (Gilfillan, *op. cit.* p. 79). While we may be thankful that Shelley left "Job" alone we may regret that Milton did not produce a poetic version of the book as he once thought of doing.

Modern astronomy has greatly increased our sense of the wonders of the earth and the universe, so that the Divine Challenge to man should be greater than ever. Certainly "an undevout astronomer is mad."

Let us note how a modern poet has expressed his sense of the Divine Challenge presented by the wonderful works of God in creation.

"Oh, wonder of Cosmical Order ! oh, Maker and Ruler of all,
Before whose Infinite Greatness in silence we worship and fall !

Could I doubt that the Will which keeps this great Universe
 steadfast and sure
 Might be less than His creatures thought, full of goodness, pitiful,
 pure ?
 Could I dream that the Power which keeps those great suns circling
 round,
 Took no thought for the humblest life which flutters and falls to
 the ground ?”

(LEWIS MORRIS : EVENSONG)

What was his conclusion ? It was this —
 “Oh, Faith ! thou art higher than all”

A vast literature has gathered round this Book of Job and books concerning it continue to be written though they add little or nothing to our knowledge of the subject. Here my aim has been much more difficult than the writing of a commentary or a book about The Book of Job but also much more useful and direct, namely to present the Book of Job in modern English and in verse and to render the meaning of the whole book clearer to the general reader in the English-speaking world. “Understandest thou what thou readest ?” This is a challenging question put to us by the Scriptures themselves. The Book of Job has greatly suffered by not being understood even by those who professed to be expounding its meaning — as some sermonic literature abundantly proves. This metrical paraphrase will, I hope, serve two useful purposes — by rendering the meaning of the book clearer and by promoting its literary appreciation.

The Prologue

Chapter 1. The character, family and wealth of Job (1-5); The First Council in Heaven : Satan (the Accuser) is permitted to test the quality of Job's faith by afflicting him with bereavement and temporal loss (6-12); Job suffers loss and bereavement but retains his faith and trust in God (13-22).

Chapter 2. The Second Council in Heaven : Satan is permitted to afflict Job with bodily disease and great pain. (1-7a); Job's suffering (7b-10); His three friends visit him (11-13).

Part One

Chapter 3. Job wishes he had never been born; he desires to die.

Chapters 4-5. Job's friends, instigated by Satan, make false charges against Job of having deserved his misery by being guilty of sin. Eliphaz makes the first attack, a plausible plea calling on Job to repent and bases his speech on a vision of the night.

Chapters 6-7. Job replies to Eliphaz by disclaiming the charge that he deserves to suffer. He describes hypocritical friendship, the bitterness of human sorrow and pain, and repeats his desire to die.

Chapter 8. Bildad rebukes Job and appeals to "tradition" as the proof of the truth of the doctrine of retribution, namely, that no individual ever suffers without having deserved to suffer.

Chapters 9-10. Job replies to Bildad by denouncing the false condemnation of the innocent by the upholders of the traditional doctrine. While disavowing any claim to perfect sinlessness he utterly denies that he has deserved to suffer and he asserts his just conduct, his faith in and obedience to God's commandments. He appeals to God for an explanation and he speaks ironically to the kind of God in whom his friends profess to believe.

Chapter 11. Zophar, incensed by what he regards as Job's blasphemous speech, accuses him of arrogance, conceit and self-righteousness. He declares that Job deserves to suffer more than he already suffers ! He declares that God requires all sufferers to confess that their sins are the direct cause of their sufferings.

Chapters 12—14. Job makes a spirited reply to Zophar and accuses his friends of calumny, slander, falsehood and cant. He shows that the actual facts disprove the traditional doctrine of retribution, that old men are not always wise but are sometimes the opposite and are often very sinful, that the notoriously wicked and sinful often enjoy excellent health and prosperity throughout their lives on earth and that their sins are condoned and ignored by fawning sycophants. Job appeals to God and His mercy, speaks of the brevity of life, the finality of death, and his longing for resurrection.

Part Two

Chapter 15. In a second speech Eliphaz accuses Job of subverting the worship of God by attacking God's dealings with Man and Nature. He asserts the infallibility of tradition and that the prosperous but impenitent wicked are always living in a state of terror, fear and suspicion. He describes their inexorable doom in this life on earth.

Chapters 16-17. In a second reply to Eliphaz, Job rebukes his 'miserable comforters'. He appeals to the Witness in Heaven to vindicate his righteous character.

Chapter 18. In a second speech Bildad asserts the doom of the wicked here in this world, and declares that Job has been a hypocrite who has only appeared to be righteous.

Chapter 19. In a second reply to Bildad, Job denies that he has been a hypocrite and that the wicked always suffer in this life on earth. Job longs for a permanent memorial written on rock and in letters of lead testifying to the fact that, though he suffered and died, yet he was a righteous man.

Chapters 20 and 24 (18-21). In a second speech Zophar accuses Job of insulting talk and he draws a graphic picture of the doom of the wicked.

Chapter 21. In a second reply to Zophar, Job indignantly rejects his false insinuations and charges. He depicts the ungodly rich in their pleasures, unpunished sins, abiding health, comfort and ease, receiving the lying praise of men when they die. Job abhors the friends' false doctrine that the descendants of the wicked and not the wicked themselves should be punished.

Part Three

Chapter 22. In a third speech Eliphaz falsely accuses Job of thinking that he confers some benefit upon God by obeying Him. He makes cruel, false and reckless accusations against Job's character and conduct and asserts that Job is being punished by God for these sins. He accuses Job not only of calling in question God's justice but of being a Deist.

Chapters 23-24. In a third reply to Eliphaz, Job makes a trenchant and sustained indictment of the whole existing social order of things wherein "man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." He denounces persecutors and exploiters and slave-owners and describes the cruelties they inflict and the sufferings of their victims. He again affirms that he suffers unjustly and he appeals to God to intervene.

Chapters 25-26 (5-14). In a third speech Bildad misapplies to the case of Job the view that, all men being sinners, Job has no cause to complain when he is made an example to warn other sinners.

Chapters 26 (1-4) - 27 (2-6). In a third reply to Bildad, Job ironically describes him and his friends as infallibly wise. Job persists in his claim that his sufferings are not the punishment of his sins.

Chapter 27 (7-23). In a third speech, Zophar declares again that Job is a self-righteous hypocrite.

Chapter 28. Here is inserted in the Book of Job a poem on the nature and mystery of true wisdom. This is generally regarded as a much later addition to the original Book of Job.

Chapters 29-31. Job makes his final magnificent speech in defence of his life and character. He describes his cherished memories of his past happy life. He describes the misery and contempt to which he is subjected at present. He expresses his readiness to have his character and conduct minutely examined by God and man.

Part Four

Chapters 32-37. Elihu's interpretation of suffering. This part is generally regarded as a much later addition to the original Book of Job. It contains little that is new and poetically it is on a much lower

plain than the rest of the book. In a recent book ("Primitive Christianity" E.T. p. 36), Bultmann has said that the "Book of Job has been worked over in the interests of the Jewish belief in divine chastening and retribution, *above all* by the insertion of the discourses of Elihu."

Part Five

Chapters 38-42 : 6 The Divine Challenge — God's sublime questions to Job and his friends. Poetically this is the greatest part of the Book of Job containing as it does several notable descriptions of God's wonderful works in creation and providence and in the world of animate nature and living creatures — e.g., the wild mountain ass, the unicorn, the peacock, the ostrich, the war-horse and the eagle. Certain parts referring to Behemoth (chapter 40 : 15-24) and to Leviathan (chapter 41) are generally regarded as later additions to the Book of Job.

The Epilogue

Chapter 42 : 7-17. God rebukes the three friends of Job and vindicates Job's righteous character and life. God brings Job's sufferings to an end and blesses him with twice as much as he ever possessed before, restores to him his sons and daughters, and grants him a very long life on earth.

THE PROLOGUE

THE BOOK OF JOB

Chapters 1 and 2

- In the country of Uz there once lived a man Job,
Who had seven strong sons and three daughters most fair :
Not a man in his time could be found on this globe,
1 For such goodness and kindness with him to compare. 1-2
- He had thousands of camels and oxen and sheep,
And was richer than others who lived in the East.
His concern for the poor was so real and so deep
2 He was loved and admired by the greatest and least. 3
- Now each son used to give a great feast to the rest,
And to ask all his sisters to eat and to drink,
But their father was anxious and made a request
3 That of duty to God they should constantly think. 4
- In the morning he offered atonement for each,
Even offerings equal in number to all
Lest His Word they had broken in thought or in speech,
4 By forgetting their God or renouncing His Call. 5

The First Council in Heaven

- When the Angels appeared in the Presence Divine
The Accuser was there to condemn all mankind
For he said that no man was sincere in design
5 When he claimed to serve God with his hand or his mind. 6

-
- S.1. "The literal translation of the opening words would be 'once upon a time there was a man.' The use of the perfect denotes that we are dealing not with history but saga. Its purpose is to call attention, not to the exact time of events, but to the individual typical case. It is uncertain what land is meant by Uz. Syria and Edom have been suggested ; on the whole Edom is perhaps the most likely. Job's name is introduced without the addition of his descent, as is usual in the case of a thoroughly historical personage (1 S.1 : 1). The meaning of the name is not known — it formed part of the original tradition" (R. S. Franks, op. cit.). No doubt there was a historical person called Job and the Book of Job has been based upon the tradition (Volksbuch) about his great sufferings. Cf. note to S.15. Cf. I Kings 22 : 10
- S.5. The Accuser is 'The Satan' in Hebrew and means either 'The Devil' or The Adversary or, alternatively, an Angel whose official duty it was to enquire into the real motives of men. On the basis of the first interpretation the poet Burns refers to this passage in his "Address to the De'il". Byron was impressed with this picture of Satan being summoned back to heaven. Cf. the prologue of Goethe's "Faust".

The Almighty then asked of him "Where have you been ?"
 He replied " I have gone to and fro on The Earth,
 I have walked up and down, many things I have seen,
 6 Not a man have I found of real goodness and worth." 7

Then said God " There is Job whom you choose to ignore,
 A true servant of mine and a man without blame
 Who the longer he lives seeks to please me the more
 7 By avoiding all evil and praising My Name." 8

The Accuser replied " Does he serve Thee for naught ?
 Thou has kept him secure and his family too ;
 Thou has prospered his work and enriched his fair lot,
 8 So no wonder he gives Thee obedience due ! 9-10

Let Thy favour depart and his happiness cease,
 Let him suffer such loss as he cannot replace,
 Let bereavement befall and his sorrows increase,
 9 All allegiance to Thee he will curse to Thy face." 11

Then said God " To confirm that his goodness will stand,
 His possessions I place in your pow'r to destroy,
 But his flesh I forbid you to touch with your hand "
 10 So Accuser resolved his new pow'r to employ. 12

Job in Adversity

When his sons and his daughters were gay at a feast,
 He was told of a raid which Sabeans had made,
 On his oxen and asses not leaving a beast,
 11 While his keepers they put to the sword's cruel blade. 13-15

S.8. Cf. J. H. Newman : The Dream of Gerontius — " He'll slave for hire and not from love."

S.9. The word 'curse' here does not mean the use of profane or blasphemous speech but renunciation of allegiance.

S.11. " Between verses 12 and 13 there is an interval, an ominous stillness like that which precedes the storm. The poet has drawn aside the curtain to us and we know what is impending. Job knows nothing " (A. B. Davidson).

- While the servant was speaking another one said,
 " All your sheep and your goats and your shepherds as well,
 Have been struck down by lightning and all are now dead,
 12 And alone I am left the sad tidings to tell." 16
- Yet another reported, to add to his woes,
 " The Chaldeans have stolen your camels and slain,
 All your servants but me when we tried to oppose ;
 13 Against many so few could not victory gain." 17
- At this moment a servant came gasping with grief,
 " O my Master ! your sons and your daughters are dead !
 A great wind from the desert, exceeding belief,
 14 Struck the house that it fell with a crash on their head." 18-19
- At these tidings rose Job and his face became white,
 His lips quivered with pain and he bowed down his head,
 There he stood with shut eyes and his fingers clenched tight,
 15 To a man in such grief not a word could be said. 20
- Then he rent his rich robe to express his great woe,
 And he shaved his head bare to denote his great loss,
 He prostrated himself to his Maker to show
 16 That his trust was abiding whatever the cross. 20
- Then arising he said " At my birth I had naught,
 When I die I must leave all possessions behind.
 All events with the mercy of God are so fraught,
 17 If He gives or He takes, He is blessed and kind. 21-22

S.15. " The history of Job was probably a tradition in the East ; his name, like that of Priam of Greece, the symbol of fallen greatness and his misfortunes the problem of the philosophers " (Froude). Job is mentioned in Ezekiel 14 : 14, 20 and in the Epistle of James 5 : 11.

JOB CHAPTER II

The Second Council in Heaven

The Accuser appeared before God who declared :
 " You have tried the good Job by afflicting him sore ;
 You have stripped him of much, scarce a thing have you
 spared,

18 Yet you see that he trusts me as well as of yore." 1-3

So Accuser replied " Yes, his faith he retains,
 But the reason is clear : he is safe in his skin.
 To preserve their own lives all will yield up their gains,

19 If Thou touchest his flesh, Thou wilt see he will sin." 4-5

The Almighty declared " Him I place in your pow'r,
 But whatever he suffers his life you must spare,
 You will see that good Job will remain like a tow'r;

20 A true servant of mine both beloved and fair." 6

So Accuser departed to try once again,
 To destroy the allegiance of Job to his God,
 By attacking his body with blemish and pain,

21 All to prove that no man will submit to His rod. 7a

Soon he smote the good Job from his feet to his head :
 His whole body was covered with tumours and boils.
 He could find no relief as he lay in his bed,

22 From the pain which assailed like a snake with its coils. 7b

S.19. There seems to have been a proverb 'skin for skin' meaning that skins were regarded as one of the chief mediums of exchange so that a man would give or receive a skin for what was regarded as of equal worth.

S.20. It is important to note that when Job is represented as 'a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil' so that 'there is none like him in the earth' (C1 : 8), this is not meant to assert that he was absolutely 'sinless' for no man can be so, but simply that as regards all civic morality, and the outward duties of morality and religion and sincerity of the heart he was outstandingly righteous and good : compared with most men he was 'perfect' and 'unique'

What a pitiful sight as he sat in the dust,
 As he scraped at his flesh with a potsherd of clay !
 Then his wife said in anger " In God do you trust ?
 23 You should curse, though you die for your cursing today." 8-9

He replied " Hold your tongue ! Do not speak like a fool !
 From His hand what is good in our lives we receive,
 And with wisdom most perfect the world He doth rule :
 24 When afflictions He sends we must hope and believe." 10a

With the words of his lips he was guiltless of sin,
 So Accuser considered what more he could do.
 To destroy his devotion and victory win,
 25 He would tempt his good friends to bring charges untrue ! 10b

There were three of his friends who had come to condole,
 Called Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar by name.
 When they saw him so suffer they could not control,
 26 Their emotions of pity and sorrow and shame. 11

For their tunics they tore, on their heads they flung dust,
 With loud crying they swayed as they sat on the ground.
 They remained for a week with no food but a crust,
 27 Not a word did they speak in his anguish profound. 12-13

S.23. The poet Burns, referring to Job, reminds Satan how he " lowsed his ill-tongued wicked scawl was warst ava " (Address to the De'il). The poet Blake also represents Job's wife as constantly beside him, presumably nagging at him.

S.24. 'fool' here means a heartless person.

S.26. Eliphaz means 'my God is pure gold' or 'God is strength'; Bildad : son of strife ; Zophar : 'exaltation'.

S.27. The silent sympathy of friends :—

" They do not inflict on him meaningless commonplaces . . . not daring to intrude upon him, they are for ever an example of what man once was and ought to be to man " (Mark Rutherford).

" Bishop Myriel had the art of sitting down, *and holding his tongue for hours*, by the side of the man who had lost the wife he loved, or of a mother bereaved of her child " (Victor Hugo). Pointing out that the ancient poet was not only writing about an individual man (Job) but was writing history on a large scale, the history of the sufferings of Israel, A. B. Davidson has remarked that 'the author has a solution which is new, to the effect, namely, that the calamity is not a punishment or chastisement on account of sin, as others held, but a trial of righteousness. This view he invests in all the dramatic splendour which distinguishes the Prologue.'

PART ONE

THE BOOK OF JOB

Chapters 3 to 14 inclusive

JOB : CHAPTER III

Stanza
Number

Job laments the day of his birth

Verses
in A.V.

- Let the day of my birth be forgotten by all,
And the night of the saying ' The babe is a boy '
Let it be like the darkness which hangs like a pall,
28 Over Hades excluding the wicked from joy. 1-3
- Let it perish and drop from the number of days,
Be ignored by the Lord in His heaven on high.
Let the darkness descend and obscure the sun's rays,
29 Let the cloud and the shadow of death on it lie. 4-5
- Let that night be abhorred and in solitude dwell,
Let its stars by the gloom be deprived of their light.
Let enchanters beset it with curse and with spell,
30 Let the dawn never come to diminish that night. 6-7 and 9
- Let it be like a day of despair and of gloom,
When the mourners are hopeless lamenting their dead,
Whom they leave in the dark and the cold of the tomb,
31 And return with the hearts feeling heavy as lead. 8
- Well for me had I died at my birth on that morn,
For mine eyes had not seen any sorrows and woes !
Well for me had I been like a baby still-born,
32 And kept safe from the hands of all sinners and foes ! 10-11

S.28. Cf. Jer. 20 : 14-18. Here after the Hebrew Prologue (which is in prose and part of the ancient tradition) the *Poem* of Job begins and the patient Job gives place to the impatient Job who deploras the fact that he ever was born.

S.29. Cf. Shakespeare : King John 3 : 1 'A wicked day . . . turn this day out of the week.'

S.30. Stars — Venus and Mercury as heralds of the morn.

Enchanters — literally 'those who are ready to rouse up Leviathan' a mythical monster supposedly the cause of eclipses of the sun. Cf.26 : 13 and S.352. 'Let them curse it who have power to ban days and make them infausti ; those who have power to rouse the Dragon . . ' The dawn — literally in Hebrew 'the eyelids of the morn.' In ancient mythology 'Dawn' was a lovely maiden from whose eyes the light streams as she awakens in the morning. Cf. Milton : Lycidas, 1.26 'the opening eyelids of the morning' and Sophocles : Antigone 103. Cf. 41 : 18.

- But alas, I was spared for my mother to see,
 To enliven her heart and to gladden her eye,
 For my father to welcome and to rest on his knee,
 33 And to live on that day when 'twas better to die ! 12
- I had slept in the grave in oblivion sweet,
 With the kings and the princes and statesmen of old,
 Who have pyramids built for their memories mete,
 34 And have filled them with treasures of silver and gold. 13-15
- Had I never been born, I had rested in peace,
 Where the pow'r of the wicked is finished and past,
 Where the weary from trouble have won their release,
 35 Where the victim and victor are equal at last. 16-17
- There the prisoners rest from their labours and pains,
 And are deaf to the threats and the shouts of their foes,
 There the small and the great forget losses and gains,
 36 And the slave is secure from all insults and blows. 18-19
- Can you tell why the wretched are kept in the light,
 And why life is maintained for the desolate soul ?
 Why does God keep a man in such pitiful plight
 37 Whom He cripples with pain without cure or control ? 20-21

S.33. 'knee' — Cf. Gen. 50 : 23.

S.34. 'kings' Cf. Addison: Spectator, March 30, 1711 : 'When I see kings lying by those who deposed them . . . I reflect with sorrow on the little competitions, factions and debates of mankind.' Cf. Shirley : Death the Leveller — 'The glories of our blood and state . . . etc. 'pyramids' — So Ewald, Duhm and Budde. 'stately tombs' (McFadyen). Cf. Lucretius : The Nature of the Universe, Book 3 (Life and Mind) trans. by R. E. Latham, Penguin Classics, p. 127 'Death has come to many another monarch . . . add to this company the discoverers of truth and beauty . . . Homer . . . Demosthenes . . . Epicurus'.

S.35. Cf. Sophocles : Oedipus at Colonus, 1225. " Not to be born is, past all prizing, best ; but when a man hath seen the light, this is next best by far, that with all speed he should go thither whence he has come " (Jebb's translation).

S.37. Can you tell . . . ? This is " the kernel of the first lament of Job, which is not a declaration of innocence, or a complaint, or a murmuring against God, but a bitter and anxious cry, ' Wherefore ? ' Were his fate not hidden from him he would bear it boldly and put Satan to shame " (Duhm, New World, 1894 p. 335, quoted by Strahan, op. cit. p. 55).

Why is life so prolonged to a man in despair,
 Who is hoping for death which for long is delayed,
 More than searchers for gold or for treasure most rare,
 38 And would welcome the rest for which long he has prayed ? 22-23

For my sighing embitters my food and my drink,
 And my groanings resemble the wind and the rain.
 Yes, my suffering soul has been brought to the brink,
 39 Of despair by my sorrow, affliction and pain. 24

For the pangs that I dread are attacking me fast,
 All my fears are fulfilled to my loss and my pain,
 No relief or repose can I find here at last,
 40 No escape from my woe and my agony gain. 25-26

JOB : CHAPTER IV

Eliphaz in a first speech opens the controversy with Job whom he rebukes for despair and whom he accuses of sin.

Then Eliphaz replied in a plausible way :
 " You must take no offence if we venture to speak ;
 As friends candid and true what we think we must say.
 41 Your own good, we assure you, is all that we seek. 1-2

In the past many persons you guided and taught ;
 You put hope into men who were weak and afraid ;
 You upheld by your words when all else availed naught,
 42 All the timid and fearful courageous you made. 3-4

S. 37-3.38. Cf. Cowper's lines in "The Shrubbery" :—

" O happy shades ! to me unblest !
 Friendly to peace, but not to me !
 How ill the scene that offers rest,
 And heart that cannot rest agree !

Cf. the still more haunting lines of Burns :—

" Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me !
 The present only toucheth thee :
 But, Oeh ! I backward cast my e'e
 On prospects drear !
 An' forward, tho' I canna see, I guess an' fear ! (To a Mouse)

- But alas, when for sin you are punished by God,
 You are hopeless, impatient and long for the grave ;
 When in justice He smites you in wrath with His rod,
 43 You despair of His mercy and power to save ! 5-6
- Does your faith not afford you support and relief ?
 Your integrity fail to give hope and console ?
 Though your life has seemed blameless in deed and belief,
 44 You have sinned and the punishment due you must thole. 6
- Do the innocent, righteous and just ever fail ?
 All the good that they do they must reap here below,
 But the sinners and wicked great ill shall assail.
 45 Why despair, as you do, at your losses and woe ? 7-8
- For the wicked are smitten by God in His ire,
 By the breath of His mouth they are scattered and die,
 Though they roar like the lions in fury or fire,
 46 When their prey has escaped and the sound rends the sky. 9-11
- Once a word was conveyed to mine ear in the night,
 And it came as by stealth like a thief in the gloom,
 As I lay like a man in a trance at the sight,
 47 Of mysterious things which appear in his room. 12-13

S.43. " Now the poet lets us hear what the theology of his time has to say of such unhappiness " (Duhm, quoted by Strahan).

S.47. " The most ancient, the finest and the most impressive description of a spiritual apparition ever penned " (Cox, quoted by Strahan). " There is a passage in the Book of Job amazingly sublime, and this sublimity is principally due to the terrible uncertainty of the thing described We are first prepared with the utmost solemnity for the vision ; we are first terrified, before we are let into the obscure cause of our emotion : but when this grand cause of terror makes its appearance, what is it ? Is it not wrapt up in the shades of its own incomprehensible darkness more awful, more striking, more terrible, than the liveliest description, than the clearest painting, could possibly represent it ? " (Burke : Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful, part 2 section 4).
 " His famous vision in the night . . . is an exaggeration and does nothing but declare, what might as well have been declared without it, that man is not just in the eyes of perfect purity " (Mark Rutherford).

I was seized by a terror and horror so strong,
That my trembling was shaking all bones in my frame,
Then my hair stood on end as a ghost came along,
48 And in passing my face it addressed me by name. 14-15

There it stood and though still it was formless to me
For mine eyes could not see its real colour or shape,
Yet this spirit so dreadful I plainly could see,
49 I was held by its stare and I could not escape. 16

In the silence so eerie I heard it proclaim :
" Before God there are none who are perfectly pure,
Even Angels in heaven who praise His great name,
50 Hide their faces from light which they cannot endure. 17-18

What of those who are dwelling in houses of clay,
Who are made of the dust and to dust must return,
Who are frail like the moths which survive but a day,
51 And which fly into flames which attract and them burn ? 19

At each moment each day they are dying alone,
They are passing unnoticed to death and the grave,
They are vanishing hourly from earth all unknown,
52 Both the poor and the rich, both the weak and the brave. 20

S.49. Cf. Milton : *Paradise Lost*, Book 2, line 665

' . . . The other shape,
If shape it might be called that shape had none,
Distinguishable in member, joint or limb '.

S.51 - S.52. Cf. Aristophanes : *The Birds*, line 814.

'Ho ! ye men dim-lived by nature, closest to the leaves in feature,
Feeble beings, clay-crete, shadowy tribes inanimate,
Wingless mortals, in a day, doleful, dreamlike swept away.'

(Kennedy's translation)

" Ye children of man ! whose life is a span,
Protracted with sorrow from day to day,
Naked and featherless, feeble and querulous,
Sickly calamitous creatures of clay !"

(Aristophanes in *English Verse* : J. H. Frere, *World Classics*, p. 203, O.U.P.)

" Hundreds and thousands of human beings swarmed past him, and he could not help saying to himself as he looked up to the grey sky 'Is it true, then ? Does God really know anything about me ? Are we not born by the million every week like spawn ? Is not humanity the commonest and cheapest thing in the world ?' But as yet his faith was unshaken and he repelled the doubt as a temptation of Satan " (Mark Rutherford : *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane*, p. 138).

- They are kept, while they live, by the power of God,
 They depart, when He wills, and then vanish for aye.
 Though He makes them to pass underneath His great rod,
 53 Without wisdom they go on their soul's lonely way. 21

JOB : CHAPTER V

- If you call is there any to make a reply ?
 Will you turn to an angel and ask him to plead ?
 The resentment of fools will but cause them to die ;
 54 Indignation and passion are folly indeed. 1-2

- I have seen an impenitent fool take a stand,
 Like a tree which takes root but is blown to the ground,
 Then his children were cheated and robbed out of hand,
 55 And no man to defend them could ever be found. 3-4

- For the hungry like locusts consumed all their corn,
 And the thirsty their milk like the desert the rain.
 Now no suffering springs from the ground in a morn,
 56 ' Where is smoke there is fire ' is a fact that is plain ! 5-6

- As a fire ejects sparks so his sin is the cause,
 Of the losses and pain he is made to endure ;
 In some way he has scorned or transgressed divine laws,
 57 And the punishment due is a part of his cure. 7

- In your place I would turn to my Maker and say :
 " I have sinned against Thee and I humbly repent "
 He does wonders and marvels on earth ev'ry day,
 58 And perhaps in His mercy from wrath will relent. 8-9

S.53. " It is pathetic to reflect that the vision of Eliphaz, so awe-inspiring in itself, and described in language the most impressive which has ever served to make an apparition real, does but bring to him a supernatural sanction of his disheartening dogma concerning the corruption of mankind !" (Aked, op. cit.).

S.56. The meaning of the Hebrew text of v.5 is very uncertain.

S.57. The ordinary translation of v.7 ('Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward') though it expresses a universal truth is less in keeping with the context than the above. The Hebrew text is uncertain in meaning as the words 'is born' can be pointed in five different ways.

He pours rain on the earth and He blesses the field ;
 He exalts the abased and relieves the forlorn ;
 He destroys all weapons the crafty can wield ;
 59 All the plots of the wicked He holds up to scorn. 10-12

He defeats all the cunning with guile like their own,
 And He ruins the schemes of the wily and proud ;
 In the daytime they wander in darkness alone,
 60 And at noon they are groping like men in a cloud. 13-14

The imprisoned He frees from the hand of the strong
 And the weak He protects from the tyrant's misrule ;
 The defenceless He shields from the maddening throng
 61 And the wise He preserves from the mouth of the fool. 15-16

The forlorn receive hope from the word of His pow'r
 And the downcast are lifted to praise His great name,
 Evildoers are thwarted from hour unto hour,
 62 And the boastful and selfish are covered with shame. 16

Lo, the man who is chastened by God should be glad !
 Do not spurn the Almighty's correcting with pain,
 For He binds up and heals when afflicting the bad
 63 When He smites He is seeking the sinner to gain. 17-18

S.60. Cf. Genesis 19 : 11 and 2 Kings 6 : 18-20.

S.62. Eliphaz and Elihu (C.34f) differ in their interpretations of Job's suffering : for Eliphaz, Job's repentance will result in pardon and restored prosperity ; for Elihu, repentance will mainly have a good effect on Job's character. The idea that the truly righteous ever suffer in this world is thoroughly abhorred by Eliphaz as a denial of the orthodox and certain doctrine of retribution.

S.63. There does not seem to be anything to support the view of Davidson, Dillman and Delitzschs that Job's friends regarded suffering as anything other than punishment for the sins of the sufferer himself, or at least of his relations and ancestors. While they admit that Job has, seemed blameless — 'a perfect and upright man and one that fears God and escheweth evil' as God testified (C.1 : 8) — they prefer their 'orthodox doctrine of retribution' to any kind of admission which would seem to shake that doctrine. Hence when baffled by the facts and by Job's replies, Eliphaz falsely accuses Job of specific sins in C.22.

He will save you in trouble again and again
 And protect you in war from the stroke of the sword.
 He will rescue in famine from death and from pain
 64 From the scourge of the plague He will see you restored. 19-21

You can laugh at the danger of death and disease,
 And be fearless of animals savage and wild ;
 All the beasts you possess will seem anxious to please
 65 In your fields they will stay wholly harmless and mild. 22-23

You will find that your house is a fortress and shield,
 That your flocks are complete when the counts you compare,
 That your family grows like the grass of the field,
 66 And that all are most comely and healthy and fair. 24-25

So your hair will be white when you come to the grave,
 Like a sheaf which is heavy and ripe in the Fall.
 We have noted the facts and seen truth which can save.
 67 You must lay it to heart and remember it all. 26-27

JOB : CHAPTER VI

*Job's first reply to Eliphaz in which he denies that his sufferings
 are the punishment incurred by his sins.*

Then said Job to his friend " So you censure my speech !
 Please compare my despair with the weight of my woe.
 It is heavier far than the sand on the beach,
 68 Thus my words seem so rash and my spirit so low. 1-3

The Almighty has buried His arrows in me
 And their poison is killing my life and my soul
 Yes the terrors of God are as great as can be,
 69 Like an army besieging and taking great toll. 4

- The wild ass does not bray unless hungry for grass,
And the ox does not low at his fodder in stall :
My repinings are due to the ills which harass ;
70 They are moans from a man who is ready to fall. 5
- Will the food be enjoyed which is lacking in salt ?
Has the white of an egg any savour or taste ?
So my soul your contention that mine is the fault,
71 Must repel as untrue and as doctrine debased. 6-7
- Unto God I appeal to allow my request :
Let Him grant me relief from my anguish and woe ;
Let Him crush me forever and grant me my rest ;
72 Let His hand me remove to dark Sheol below. 8-9
- It would comfort my soul that the truth would remain,
That the will of my God I did try to obey,
This consoles me in fact, though I suffer such pain,
73 That I worshipped His name both by night and by day. 10
- What is left in my life except torture and shame ?
What remains of my strength to endure any more ?
What my hope to revive my estate and my name ?
74 What awaits in the future my peace to restore ? 11
- Have I strength like the stones any more to endure ?
Is my flesh like the bronze which resists all decay ?
My resources within are no longer secure.
75 My whole life is in ruins so why should I stay ? 12-13

S.71. 'The white of an egg' : the meaning of the Hebrew here is uncertain. R.S.V. translates 'the slime of the purslane.' In any case Job is clearly rebuking Eliphaz for insipid and unpalatable doctrine. McFadyen regards 7b as an Aramaic gloss to 6b.

S.72. Cf. Keats : Ode to a Nightingale —

" I have been half in love with easeful death."

S.73. The Hebrew is uncertain in meaning in v. 10, e.g.,

' I would exult in its unsparing pain.' (Moffat, R.S.V.)

- To a man in despair all his friends should be kind,
 Or the fear of the Lord they forsake or deny.
 But as treacherous torrents have banks undermined,
 76 You have falsely accused me appointed to die. 14-15
- For your speech, like the streams from the hills, overflows,
 Like the rivers which rise in the season of rain,
 Which are turbid and dark with the ice and the snows,
 77 But in summer run dry when they reach the hot plain. 16-17
- When the caravans come seeking water in vain,
 Even traders from Tema in harrowing heat,
 Or Arabian travellers eager for gain,
 78 Disconcerted by drought they in sorrow retreat. 18-20
- So the comfort you offer is nothing at all,
 Though the words you employ sound so pious and right.
 When you talk of my sin you just cannot recall
 79 Anything I have done to deserve such a plight. 21
- Did I ask for a gift on account of my woe ?
 Or request you to offer a bribe from your gold ?
 Did I ask you to save me from bandit or foe ?
 80 Or to rescue me quick from a tyrant's stronghold ? 22-23
- Can you prove that I suffer because of my sin ?
 Can you tell me exactly what fault you have found ?
 I am dumb if you can and the contest you win !
 81 If you show you are right you have minds most profound ! 24
- When containing the truth all reproofs are allowed :
 They are needful and cogent the sinner to warn,
 But you make accusations as vague as a cloud,
 82 You ignore the plain facts and the tale you adorn. 25

S.76. The Hebrew of v. 14 is obscure. I follow the meaning in R.S.V. but Moffat and Ewald have 'or he will give up faith in the Almighty' and 'abandon the fear of the Almighty.'

S.78. "Ask some Australian explorer, ask some soldier from the deserts that skirt the Nile — he will tell you the deadly significance of the metaphor." (Bradley, op. cit.)

- But you censure my words and you say they are wild !
 Please recall that I speak as a man in despair.
 Why expect me to talk in a manner most mild,
 83 When the teeth of my torments my body do tear ? 26
- So you think I deserve to endure all the brunt,
 Of this suffering, sorrow, affliction, and pain !
 You pretend that my sin makes my mind very blunt,
 84 That I cannot discern what to you is so plain ! 27-30
- Be no longer unjust : look me straight in the eye,
 And admit that you cannot convict me of guilt.
 Discontinue your cant which contains a great lie.
 85 I affirm that my life on the Truth has been built. 28-29

JOB : CHAPTER VII

- Has not man upon earth a most wearisome life,
 Like a labourer bearing the burden and heat ?
 Does not man always seek for the end of the strife,
 86 Like a worker expecting his wages and meat ? 1-2
- I am forced to endure many months of distress,
 Many tedious nights when I long for the dawn ;
 Many torturing days when such pains me possess
 87 That my life is a bane and I long to be gone. 3-4

Job C.7. " Everything that can be said by a sick man against life is in this chapter. The whole of the vast subsequent literature is summed up here and he who has once read it may fairly ask never to be troubled by anything more on that side." (Mark Rutherford, quoted by Strahan, op. cit.)

S.86. Cf. Homer : *The Odyssey* Book 13 trans. by E. V. Rieu, p. 209. " But Odysseus kept turning his face towards the blazing sun, as though to hasten its descent, for he was longing to be off. And as the ploughman . . . yearns for his supper . . ." Cf. Gray's *Elegy*, " The curfew tolls . . . etc." Cf. Burns : *My ain kind dearie*, O !

" When o'er the hill the eastern star
 Tells bughtin-time is near, my jo ;
 And owsen frae the furrowed field
 Return sae dowf and wearie O."

S.87. Cf. Tennyson : *Vastness*

" Pain that . . . at night
 Stirs up again in the heart of the sleeper and stings him back to the
 curse of the light."

- For my skin is inflamed and all covered with crust,
 And I suffer the torment of itch and of pain.
 How I long to expire and be laid in the dust,
 88 But am left just alive to endure and complain ! 5
- Like a weaver's swift shuttle my days disappear :
 On the loom of my life is a crazy design.
 O remember my life is a breath and a tear,
 89 Nevermore shall I see former days that were mine ! 6-7
- For the man whom you see soon will vanish from sight,
 While you look he will fade to be noticed no more,
 As the mist disappears in the sun's morning light
 90 Or the mark which you make on the sand of the shore. 8-9a
- So is he who departs to the Shadowy Sphere :
 He is gone and returns to his house nevermore,
 And the place of his kinsfolk beloved and dear,
 91 Is bereft of his presence which none can restore. 9b-10
- Unto God I will speak for I cannot restrain,
 Any longer my feelings, so bitter my soul.
 I will ask why I suffer this sorrow and pain,
 92 Which is more than a man, a mere mortal, can thole. 11

8.90. Verse 8 does not appear in the Septuagint and has been placed within double brackets by Moffat as a possible interpolation. It does not mean what Luther supposed, i.e., 'Thy hostile eyes are upon me and I perish.'

8.91. Cf. Lucretius: *The Nature of the Universe*, Book 3. "Now it is all over. Now the happy home and the best of wives will welcome you no more, nor winsome children rush to snatch the first kiss at your coming and touch your heart with speechless joy. No chance now to further your fortunes or safeguard your family . . . Ah yes! *you* are at peace now in the sleep of death, and so you will stay to the end of time. Pain and sorrow will never touch you again." (Penguin Classics, p. 123).

Cf. Gray: *The Elegy*, lines 19-24 —

"For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
 Or busy housewife ply her evenings care :
 No children run to lisp their sire's return,
 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share."

Am I wild like a sea or the dragon of old,
That Thou makest me suffer to render me tame,
Lest I injure the world by my doings so bold,
93 Like a tyrant denying Thy goodness and name ? 12

When I look to my bed to afford me relief,
When I rest on my couch for some respite and ease,
Then Thou scarest with dreams though my sleep be but brief,
94 And allowest dread nightmares my spirit to seize. 13-14

All my life is a torment awake or asleep,
O remove me I pray to my rest in the grave !
O deliver my soul and no longer me keep,
95 In this anguish from which only Thou canst me save ! 15-16

What is man that he looms very large in Thy sight,
That Thou settest Thy mind upon him all his days,
That such trials await him each morning and night,
96 That he suffers though keeping Thy law and Thy ways ? 17-18

O Observer of men why not leave me alone,
And me grant for a little some freedom from pain ?
If I sin dost Thou suffer or can I atone ?
97 Why requirest Thou me Thy great wrath to sustain ? 19-20a

As a butt for Thine arrows so sharp I remain ;
Thou my sorrows and torments and pains hast increased.
Why not pardon my sin and abolish my stain,
98 For ere long I must die, before Thee be deceased. " 20b-21

S.93. " He asks with bitter irony if he is the sea or the monster of the sea that he must be watched and subdued with plagues lest he prove dangerous to the universe. The proud waves of the sea must be confined, and a bound which they cannot pass, set to them (Cf. C 38 : 8 Jeremiah C.5 : 22) ; has he a wild untameable nature like this ?" (Davidson, op. cit.). 'Dragon' or 'sea monster' — "The primeval dragon (of Babylonian mythology) subdued by the Creator" (McFadyen).

S.98. Both Cheyne and McFadyen consider that v. 17 is like a bitter parody of Psalm 8 : 4. This seems improbable and in any case there is nothing here of the bitter cynicism of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam of Naisapur (by Fitzgerald) —

" 'Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days . . .
The Ball no Question makes of Ayes and Noes . . . "

Cf. the ' *Leben ist Leiden* ' of the German pessimists.

JOB : CHAPTER VIII

Bildad's First Speech in which he appeals to Tradition in support of the orthodox doctrine of retribution.

- Then said Bildad to Job " Why continue to talk,
In this manner so turgid we cannot endure " ?
The Almighty will punish all sinners who mock,
99 But His mercy will show to the penitent poor. 1-2
- Is it God you accuse that no justice He shows ?
That His judgment of men is perverse and unfair ?
Recollect that a man only reaps what he sows,
100 That the man who is good has no cause to despair. 3
- Since your children for sinning were taken away,
As their father you share in the burden of guilt,
Now seek God for yourself, for His favour now pray
101 That your health be restored and your wealth be rebuilt. 4-5
- If your life is well-pleasing and pure in His eyes,
He will grant you His pardon and bless what is thine.
Though your start may be small, like a plant it will rise,
102 And at last will be great by the blessing divine. 6-7
- Seek the wisdom of old which our fathers have found ;
They will tell what they know and will teach what is true.
How can men of today realise what is sound,
103 For their days are like shadows which fade from the view ? 8-10
- Without mud or a marsh can papyrus be found ?
Can the reed ever flourish in earth that is dry ?
Though uncut and all green as they grow on the ground,
104 Without water more quickly they fade neath the sky. 11-12

S.103. Here Bildad is ' laudator temporis acti.'

" These maxims of the ancient world are clothed in rich and gorgeous similes drawn from the luxuriant plant-life of the sultry East." (Davidson, op. cit.).

So conclude all the atheist's way and account ;
 So departs all the hypocrite's hope like a dream.
 All the wicked will pass like the mist on the mount,
 105 When dispersed by the wind and the sun's shining beam. 13

All his trust in himself is a gossamer thread ;
 For the spider's frail web much resembles his pride.
 He relies on his house and it falls as one dead :
 106 He embraces it well but it cannot abide. 14-15

O how green is the plant in the well-watered nook !
 How profuse are its leaves in the spot where it grows,
 With its roots all entwined near the freshening brook !
 107 How it thrives in the garden protected from foes ! 16-17

O how quickly it dies without moisture or stream !
 In the spot where it grew it will leave not a trace.
 So the man who is godless departs like a dream,
 108 Leaving others to rise in his stead and his place. 18-19

But the innocent man is preserved from all woe,
 While impenitent sinners are smitten with shame.
 Yet the Lord to the contrite His mercy will show.
 109 So repent, to rejoice and exalt His great name ! 20-22

JOB : CHAPTER IX

Job's First Reply to Bildad

Well I know, replied Job, that the truth you conceal,
 For you fail to explain how a man who is just,
 Can secure his true rights when he makes an appeal,
 110 Unto God the Almighty in whom is his trust. 1-2

S.106. " Verily the frailest of houses is the spider's house." (Koran 29 : 40 quoted by Davidson).
 S.107. The meaning of the Hebrew of v. 17b is uncertain.

- Who could answer one question if God were to ask ?
 For a man to a thousand could make no reply.
 It is folly for man to attempt such a task,
 111 And the wisdom of God to oppose or defy, 3-4
- The Almighty moves mountains in anger and wrath,
 By the word of His power the world He doth shake,
 Till its pillars are trembling like towns in the path
 112 Of a tremor which causes whole districts to quake. 5-6
- He can seal all the stars and obscure the sun's light,
 And perform greater marvels than any we see.
 He controls all alone this great world by His might,
 113 And He walks on the wind and the waves of the sea. 7-8
- All the stars, which He made, He disposed in array,
 Like the Pleiades, Bear and Orion sublime :
 Constellations and comets and galaxies say :
 114 " We were made by the Monarch of Space and of Time." 9-10
- Lo He passes and nothing have eyes ever seen !
 When He acts there are none who can stop Him and say :
 " O declare unto us what these happenings mean "
 115 Very dragons do quail when His wrath has its way. 11-13
- If He spoke what could I ever venture to say,
 And what words could I choose if I tried to dispute ?
 I am just but must stand wholly silent and say :
 116 " O have mercy and pity on one who is mute ! " 14-15

S.111. There are three possible interpretations of verses 3-4. (See Strahan, op. cit.).

If I called He would give no reply I could hear,
 For I cannot believe He would listen to me.
 When He storms and subjects me to terror and fear,
 117 I am breathless and pained and as faint as can be. 6-18

Who is stronger than God in a trial of strength ?
 Who can take Him to court to get justice and right ?
 I am just yet my mouth would condemn me at length.
 118 He would prove me, though blameless, perverse in His sight. 19-20

I maintain I am just : I think naught of my life ;
 Now it matters no more. What I know I must say :
 Both the good and the wicked He slays in the strife,
 119 And this truth is to me just as clear as the day. 21-22

When disaster brings death He appears to deride,
 The despair of the good and the plight of the just.
 The whole world to the wicked He seems to confide,
 120 And the rulers of men He makes blind to their trust. 23-24

All my days like a herald in haste disappear ;
 Without hope of regaining lost blessings they fly.
 They are passing like skiffs over seas the most drear
 121 Like the eagles which swoop on their prey from the sky. 25-26

S.117. In this chapter as elsewhere, Job recognises no "second causes" at all and does not mention Satan, and hardly suggests that anyone except God can possibly be responsible for his sufferings. His theology is that God does all though not responsible for the sinful acts of men. For him there are no impersonal laws of the universe or laws of Nature but all are laws and acts of God. He is not only a monotheist but an absolute one and because of this the problem of Job's sufferings when he is 'a perfect and upright man and one that feareth God and escheweth evil' is greatly increased.

S.120. "The dramatic form of the Book of Job enables a suffering saint to say the worst things about God which can enter into the minds of good men in their hour of darkness and temptation." (A. B. Bruce : *The Moral Order of the World*, p. 222, quoted by Strahan, *op. cit.* p. 22). Job's 'rashness of speech' is later rebuked by Zophar.

S.121. Hence the expression "Job's post" meaning a messenger of bad news, e.g., "This Job's post from Dumouriez . . . reached the National Convention." (Carlyle : *The French Revolution*, Pt. 3, Bk. 3, C. 4).

When I try to forget all my anguish and pain,
 And pretend to be cheerful and cast away care,
 I am conquered by sadness and sorrow again,
 122 I am brought to a state of the blankest despair. 27-28

“ For I dread all my pain in the days which remain,
 And I know no acquittal from Thee will arrive :
 Condemnation must come so my struggle is vain ;
 123 It is better for me to be dead than alive. 28-29

Though I wash all myself with the whitest of snow,
 Though I cleanse my two hands with the strongest of lye
 Thou would'st plunge me completely in mud of the slough
 124 That my friends in offence would me loathe and deny.” 30-31

Unlike me the Almighty is not a mere man,
 That together for judgment in court we might meet.
 How I long for a Daysman and Umpire who can
 125 Lay His hand on us both, give me leave to entreat ! 32-33

I would speak without fear if His rod were removed,
 If no more with His terrors He made me afraid
 For I know in my heart I am falsely reprov'd
 126 That no sin, as alleged, to my charge can be laid. 34-35

JOB : CHAPTER X

Now my soul is depressed, I am sick of my life
 I will give a free rein to my bitter complaint
 I will speak though in pain and my faith's hardest strife,
 127 Though embittered in heart and so ready to faint. 1

S.124. The marginal reading in v. 31 — ‘ make me to be abhorred ’ is to be preferred. Cf. McFadyen — ‘ So that even my friends would abhor me,’ and Moffatt : ‘ Till my very friends would loathe me.’

- I will say unto God " Do not leave me condemned,
Without knowing the sin which has merited wrath.
O reveal the root cause whence my sorrow has stemmed,
128 In what ways I have strayed from Thy will and Thy path ! 2
- Doth it please Thee to punish a man without cause,
To oppress Thine own folk who are made by Thy hands,
And to favour the wicked who break all Thy laws,
129 And condemn all the just who obey Thy commands ? 3
- Are Thine eyes only human and finite in sight,
Are Thy years only short like the life of a man,
That Thou knowest my sin but ignorest my right,
130 As a man who has followed Thy way and Thy plan ? 4-6
- I am guiltless, Thou knowest, of any such sin,
As deserves all these losses and sorrows and pains.
O permit me by death my deliv'rance to win,
131 Evermore to forget former blessings and gains ! 7
- O remember Thy hands didst me form into man,
As the potter with wheel when he models the clay :
Thou didst pour me like milk which is put in a pan
132 And then curdled like cheese and removed from the whey. 8-10
- My whole frame with my skin and my flesh Thou didst clothe,
Interweaving the bones and the sinews and all,
Wilt Thou turn and destroy, as if Thou didst me loathe,
133 With a dreadful disease which all men doth appal ? 8b and 11

S.129. and 130. Cf. Jeremiah 12 : 1, Hab. 1 : 13.

S.132. Cf. Rom. 9 : 20. " But who are you, a man, to answer back to God ? Will what is moulded say to its moulder " Why have you made me thus ? " Cf. Fitzgerald : The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam of Naishapur : Stanzas 59-62. The ' irreverence ' here of Job's words is only superficial. He is addressing *the kind of God* in whom his ' miserable comforters ' believe. The true God in whom Job trusts is quite different and later vindicates Job's words by saying to these ' friends ' — " You have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has " (C. 42 : 7). Here the poet by means of poetic licence is refuting sarcastically the false theology of the friends. Strahan refers to Calvin's Institute 3 : 23 : 7.

- Thou didst grant me Thy favour as well as my life,
 And Thy care hast preserved me in body and soul,
 Yet the while didst design for me pain like a knife !
 134 All these things, I am sure, Thou didst plan and control. 12-13
- If I sin Thou dost mark me for punishment dire
 Thou wilt never acquit me of guilt in Thine eyes.
 Woe betide me if wicked : Thy wrath is like fire !
 135 Yet if guiltless my head before Thee must not rise ! 14-15
- If I venture so much as to lift up mine eyes,
 Thou dost hunt like a lion attacking his prey
 With great wonders and torments and much to surprise
 136 Thy new witnesses come to condemn my whole way. 16-17
- For what end didst Thou bring me alive from the womb ?
 How I wish I had died ere my birth while unseen,
 And been carried at once to the grave or the tomb !
 137 In the land of the living I never had been ! 18-19
- As my days are but few why not grant me relief,
 That my life may be bright for a season below ?
 Why compel me to suffer of sinners as chief ?
 138 Why not tell me the reason that Thou art my foe ? 20
- Ere I go to return nevermore to this life,
 Ere I pass to the land of deep darkness and gloom,
 To the regions like midnight with chaos and strife,
 139 With no light but the shadows of death and the tomb. 21-22

S.134. " The poet evidently intended such a theory to be the *Reductio Ad Absurdum* of the Traditional doctrine of retribution." (Strahan).

S.137.-S.139 " In what other poem in the world is there pathos deep as this." (Froude, *op. cit.*).

JOB : CHAPTER XI

The First Speech of Zophar

- To him Zophar replied in a truculent way :
 " Is a crowd of wild words to evoke no reply ?
 Is a babbler so fluent to carry the day ?
 140 Must we silently hear while you blasphemy cry ? " 1-3
- For you boast that your doctrine is utterly right,
 That your heart and your conduct are perfectly pure.
 Be ashamed of such talk ; for a man in your plight
 141 You are arrogant, proud and so smug and so sure ! 4
- But if God were to speak and His secrets reveal,
 Of His dealings with men and His judgments most sure,
 You would learn to your shame that your sin is most real :
 142 But a fragment is noticed in all you endure !
- Can you find out the secrets of Wisdom Divine ?
 Can you reach to the limit of God in His might ?
 They are higher than heaven, unique and sublime,
 143 They are deeper than death and beyond human sight. 7-8
- They are vaster than earth and far wider than seas ;
 If He charges with guilt and imprisons in pain,
 Who can stop the full force of His mighty decrees
 144 Or expect that the reason for all should be plain ? 9-10
- He well knows who are worthless and guilty of sin,
 He observes all who think that no pardon they need.
 When He chastens He seeks the lost sinner to win
 145 But the man who is dense like an ass will not heed. 11-12

S.140.f. " The reader who is interested may turn with profit to Cox's vituperative characterisation of Zophar in his commentary on " Job " ; and then he should open Joseph Parker's " People's Bible ", vol. 11, " Job " and note how Cox's denunciation of Zophar drove Parker into eulogy of the " fearlessly critical, deeply religious, Zophar " more unreasonable than Cox's bitterness. It is more than entertaining. It is significant. To preachers it is a warning." (Aked, op. cit. p. 83).

S.143. Line 2. The Hebrew means, " can you reach to the inmost being (essence) of the Almighty ?"

- If you turn unto God, let your heart become right,
 If you stretch out your hands in confession sincere
 And dispel from your dwelling all darkness by light
 146 If all sin you avoid and let God be your fear. 13-14
- Surely then you can lift up your face undismayed
 And be firm and secure and undaunted and pure.
 And forget all your woes like the shadows which fade
 147 Like the floods which arise but which seldom endure. 15-16
- Then your life will be brighter than day at the noon,
 And its shadows like dawn ere the sun has appeared,
 And in confident hope during many a moon
 148 You will look all around you with naught to be feared. 17-18
- While awake or asleep you will be without care ;
 Not a person or creature will make you afraid.
 When you prosper and gather enough and to spare,
 149 Not a few will be seeking your favour and aid. 19
- But the eyes of the wicked will fail to discern
 Any way of escape from their sorrow and pain,
 So, refusing the ways of the righteous to learn,
 150 They prefer to expire and their freedom to gain. 20

JOB : CHAPTER XII

Job's First Reply to Zophar

- " Without doubt " replied Job " you are sages who know,
 And all wisdom will perish whenever you die !
 You can solve the whole problem of evil and woe,
 151 And make ev'rything clear like the sun in the sky ! 1-2

S.151. Job's famous sarcasm ' No doubt but ye are the people . . . ' would be in modern parlance ' supermen ' ' superior persons ' — Oxford Hebrew Lexicon quoted by Strahan who compares the expression ' the people ' (meaning a nation or state) with the equally famous dictum of Louis XIV " L'état c'est moi."

- But remember ! my brains are as good as your own :
 What is true in your speeches most people well know,
 But the facts in my case you are leaving alone.
- 152 You are slanderers all who but add to my woe. 3-4
- Now the man who was answered by God when he prayed,
 Yes, the man once regarded as blameless and just,
 Is derided by friends who have plainly displayed,
- 153 That the truth and the facts they entirely distrust. 4
- The secure and the prosperous sneer at the man
 Whom adversity strikes though he faithfully served ;
 Even friends will reproach and will do all they can,
- 154 To confirm that his sorrows are wholly deserved. 5a
- When he falters and faints he is treated with scorn,
 And is wounded by charges most falsely applied.
 They will flatter the rich but the poor they will warn,
- 155 To repent and submit and to cease from their pride. 5b
- Many parasites live all unharmed and secure,
 Many godless and sinful are much at their ease :
 Throughout life their good health and abundance endure
- 156 While they live they are selfish and do as they please. 6
- Ask the beasts of the field and the birds of the air,
 Ask the fish of the sea and the creatures which crawl,
 They will tell you the truth and together declare,
- 157 That the hand of the Lord has control of them all. 7-10

Moffat places verses 4-6 within double brackets. The meaning of the Hebrew is ' exceedingly obscure ' (MacFadyen). In v. 5 the LXX differs from the Hebrew.

S.157. The name ' Jehovah ' occurs in v. 9 and (except in C. 28 which is a later addition to the Book of Job) it occurs nowhere else in the Dialogues. The Hebrew line appears also in Isaiah 41 : 20 and in some MSS. the word ' Eloah ' appears in v. 9 instead of ' Jehovah ' (so Strahan).

As the palate determines the taste of the food,
 And reports what is bitter or salty or sweet,
 So the minds of the wise discern evil or good,
 158 And the truth or the error in all that they meet. 11

But the aged, you say, are assuredly wise,
 And intelligence comes with a very long life !
 When you speak one would think you were lacking in eyes,
 159 For both folly and sin in the aged are rife. 12

Nay, to God belong wisdom, authority, might ;
 Understanding and counsel are wholly His own,
 And He gives or withholds as to Him appears right,
 160 He is ruler of all and is ruler alone. 13

When He shatters our life there is none can rebuild,
 When He cripples with pain there is none can restore.
 When He holds back the rain vegetation is killed,
 161 When He breaks up the clouds over fields the floods pour. 14-15

The Almighty controls the whole world by His pow'r
 And His providence rules over all He has made
 In the sky or the earth from the planet to flow'r
 162 The deceived and deceivers by Him are well weighed. 16

He removes the false statesmen whose ways are unsound,
 And befools the perverters of justice and right.
 He delivers the captives whom tyrants have bound,
 163 And deprives the bad kings of their crowns and their might. 17-18

He expels the false priests from their place without shoes,
 And He ruins their orders, dominion and wealth.
 He occasions the sages their words to confuse,
 164 And removes from the rulers their cunning and stealth. 19-20

S.180f. Cf. The Westminster Confession of Faith C.5 : 1-7. Determinism, which, as Ballard points out, should be called Determinedism, is the perversion by sceptical rationalism and pantheism of the Christian doctrine of Providence.

S.183f. These verses suggest that the poet lived in the time of the Captivity or at some time of great political upheaval and social unrest. Cf. C.15 : 19.

- He displays His contempt for the princes and chiefs,
 And He weakens the pow'r of the mighty and strong.
 He exposes to light shady schemes and beliefs,
 165 And reveals hidden sources of lying and wrong. 21-22
- He exalts a weak nation to greatness and might,
 And destroys it, when sin has established its rule.
 He delivers a people from bondage and plight,
 166 And enslaves them when guilty of playing the fool 23
- He confounds the dictators who live to oppress,
 And He drives them to wander in wilderness ways,
 Where they grope in the dark of despair and distress,
 167 Like a man who is drunk and who lives in a daze. 24-25

JOB : CHAPTER XIII

- All these things I have seen with my very own eyes,
 All these things I have heard with my very own ears :
 What you know I too know and can see through your lies,
 168 You excel not a whit in your wisdom by years. 1-2
- I appeal unto God in my search for some light,
 On the problem of pain undeserved by the just.
 You are forgers of lies, for injustice you fight ;
 169 You are quacks who deceive all the patients who trust. 3-4
- You might pass for wise men if your peace you would hold.
 Now then listen to me, to the charge that I bring.
 I will plead my whole case though you think I am bold ;
 170 I have freedom of speech : to this right I will cling. 5-6
- Will you argue unfairly for God and His ways ?
 Can you lie, do you think, in support of His name ?
 Will He hear if mere sycophants offer Him praise ?
 171 Does He need " special pleaders " to forward His fame ? 7-8

S.170. Cf. Proverbs 7 : 28 ' Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise.'

Cf. Shakespeare : Merchant of Venice, Act 1, Sc. 1. ' There are a sort of men whose visages
 do cream and mantle like a standing pond : and do a wilful stillness entertain with purpose
 to be dressed in an opinion of wisdom . . . '

- Will you fare very well when your motives He sifts ?
 Do you fancy that He can be tricked like a man ?
 If you do, you will find Him refusing your gifts,
 172 And chastising you well for your flattering plan. 9-10
- Will the dread of the Lord not possess all your souls ?
 Will His greatness not fill you with fear and dismay ?
 All your maxims and proverbs are ashes and holes,
 173 All your arguments fall like defences of clay. 11-12
- Hold your peace ! Let me be ! I will speak come what may !
 I will hazard my soul any risks will embrace.
 For my hope is all gone. Though my soul He should slay,
 174 I declare I am righteous and just to His face. 13-15
- Will you carefully note all I have to declare ?
 It will stand in my favour, a fact very plain,
 That no man who is godless and sinful may dare,
 175 To appear before God seeking favour to gain. 16-17
- I foresee that my case before God will succeed,
 That His verdict on me will my life justify.
 Were I guilty my case would be futile to plead,
 176 I would know I deserved but to suffer and die. 18-19
- " O my God for two things and no more do I pray,
 And no need will arise to depart from Thy sight :
 Lift the weight of Thy rod which on me Thou dost lay,
 177 And remove all Thy terrors by day and by night. 20-21

S.174. ' I will hazard my soul ' — this is the meaning of ' I will take my flesh in my teeth ' which is a figure of speech not found elsewhere in the Bible. It refers to a wild beast at bay defending itself with its teeth. ' I will put my life in my hand ' is a well-known metaphor for running great risks. Strahan contrasts the poet with Pascal, whereas the latter reveals the majesty of mind opposing matter, the former reveals the greater majesty of conscience opposing omnipotent tyranny.

C. F. Aked quotes Seneca : " O Neptune, you may save me if you will ; you may sink me if you choose ; but whatever happens, I shall hold my rudder true." (op. cit. p.23).

- Wilt Thou speak unto me and permit my reply ?
 Or allow me to speak and give answer to me ?
 O declare if I sinned, ere I drop down and die,
 178 O reveal my transgressions, how guilty I be !
- Wilt Thou tell why Thou hidest the light of thy face,
 Why Thou reckonest me for Thy singular foe ?
 A poor fluttering leaf which the winds roughly chase,
 179 A dry straw in the field when the gales strongly blow. 24-25
- For the sentence on me Thou hast passed is severe :
 That I suffer for sins and for follies of youth !
 Thou hast pinioned me fast as by foot or by ear,
 180 All my ways of escape Thou hast severed in truth. 26-27

JOB : CHAPTER XIV

- O how man sorely suffers though short is his life !
 Like a garment devoured by the moths he decays.
 Like a flow'r he appears then is cut with a knife,
 181 He departs like the light of the sun's setting rays. 1-2 and C.13 : 28
- Upon him all his life wilt Thou fasten Thy gaze,
 And condemn him to suffering, sorrow and pain ?
 There is none wholly clean at the end of his days,
 182 From his sin not a man his full freedom can gain. 3-4
- Thou hast fixed all his months, Thou hast numbered his days.
 Why not lift off Thine eyes and his happiness spare,
 And permit him to live free from pain which affrays ?
 183 Like a hireling he lives, why his comfort impair ? 5-6

S.181. "The worthy gentleman who has been snatched from us . . . has feelingly told us what shadows we are and what shadows we pursue." (Edmund Burke).

There is hope for a tree though it fall to the ground :
 It may flourish again if its roots do not fail.
 Though its stump appear dead, if some water is found,
 184 It may bud and have boughs like the rest in the dale. 7-9

But the time comes to man when he lies down to die,
 He departs from the world when he yields up his breath,
 Like the waters of lakes which in summer run dry,
 185 Or the rivers which pass through the valley of death. 10-11

He is placed in the grave nevermore to arise,
 He has closed his two eyes to the whole human race,
 Till all things disappear in the earth and the skies,
 186 He must slumber in death's everlasting embrace. 12

How I wish Thou wouldst put me in Sheol's sad shade,
 And wouldst keep me concealed for as long as Thy wrath,
 Then restore me to life ere my memory fade,
 187 To the days of my joy when I walked in Thy path ! 13

O if man could but die and arise from the dead,
 All my sorrow and pain I would willingly bear,
 Till Thy hand should appear and then lift up my head,
 188 And return me once more to the days that were fair ! 14

Thou wouldst call : I would come as the work of Thy hands,
 Thou wouldst love me anew and my life wouldst repair.
 Nevermore wouldst Thou leave me held fast by these bands,
 189 Nevermore me consign to this state of despair. 15

S.186. Job's orthodox Hebrew unbelief in immortality.

S.187. Job's wistful doubt of the orthodox unbelief.

Cf. Browning : Bishop Blougram's Apology —

" Just when we're safest, there's a sunset touch,
 A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,
 A chorus-ending from Euripides, —
 And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears,
 As old and new at once as Nature's self,
 To rap and knock and enter in our soul."

S.188. Cf. LXX ' If a man might die and live again I could wait all the days of my warfare.' This suggests a sentry during war anticipating the coming of peace.

- Then my guilt would be ended and sealed up for aye,
 Be forgotten and drowned in the depth of the seas,
 Then the light of Thy favour would shine on my way,
 190 And my life be a banquet of wines on the lees. 16-17
- But alas, even mountains through time suffer change,
 When their tops are attacked by the wind and the rain :
 As the storms and the tempests are sweeping the range,
 191 Even rocks and the soil are removed to the plain. 18-19a
- So the hope of a man is destroyed by Thy pow'r,
 Though the greatest he be, he must perish and die.
 How his countenance changes on reaching his hour,
 192 When his spirit delivers its last lonely sigh ! 19b-20
- To his sons and his daughters may come much renown ;
 They may fall, it may be, into crime and disgrace,
 But he rests unaffected by smile or by frown,
 193 All unknowing, unknown by the whole human race. 21-22

S.190. Here I follow the meaning given by Moffat and R. S. V. McFadyen reads — ' But now Thou countest my steps and passest not over my sin. My transgression is sealed in a bag ; Thou hast fastened secure mine iniquity.'

PART TWO

THE BOOK OF JOB

Chapters 15 to 21 inclusive

The Second Speech of Eliphaz against Job in which he appeals to Tradition as proving the truth of the doctrine of retribution. He accuses Job of subverting the worship of God by attacking His dealings with Nature and with Man.

- Then Eliphaz replied " Would a man who is wise,
Like a wind from the East be so wild in his talk ?
Would he speak to no profit in all his replies,
194 Using words unavailing as rain on a rock ? 1-3
- For the fear of the Lord, in effect, you subvert,
By disturbing devout meditation in man.
It is sin that inspires you such lies to assert,
195 And assists you to talk as adroitly you can. 4-5
- Your own mouth and not mine is condemning your sin,
When the words of your lips testify to your shame,
For you say that from God, you no justice can win,
196 Though imperfect you are, you are yet without blame ! 6
- Now were you the first man in the world to be born ?
Does your age far exceed all the mountains and hills ?
And the Council of God did you brightly adorn,
197 That the wisdom of God not another so fills ? 7-8
- Do you know what to us is unseen and unknown ?
Can you grasp all the truth so much better than we ?
All more aged and grey than the father you own,
198 Were much wiser than you and with us did agree. 9-10

8.194 f. " In thus accusing Job of irreverence, Eliphaz is only superficially right, and it is the purpose of the drama to exhibit a seeker after truth who never really ceases to be profoundly religious however far he may drift from his old theological moorings and however unconventional may be the language which his hard experiences sometimes wring from his lips." (Strahan).

For you slight all the comforts of God that we bring,
 When we gently declare that your sin is the cause
 Of your losses and pain and sorrow's sharp sting ;
 191 When we say " Now repent and obey all His laws." 11

Why allow your ill temper to carry you off?
 Why permit both your eyes with defiance to flash ?
 Your own mouth is the proof that at wisdom you scoff,
 200 Your own words testify that with God you do clash. 12-13

What is man but a creature corrupt and unclean ?
 He is born of the flesh with a nature impure,
 And his soul from the truth he will carefully screen ;
 201 He abides in the darkness not seeking a cure. 14

Even Angels of God veil their eyes from His light,
 And the heavens to Him are not perfectly clean,
 How much more must a man be impure in His sight,
 202 When he thirsts after sin as for water things green ! 15-16

If you listen to me I will tell what I know,
 The traditions and truths which the sages of old,
 Had received from their fathers who lived long ago,
 203 When the land was by them wholly owned and controlled 17-19

All the wicked are living in torments and fears,
 Lest avengers will come the account to redress,
 And they feel insecure though they live many years,
 204 Through the hatred and pain of the folk they oppress. 20-21

S.203 " For honourable old age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor is its measure given by number of years ; but understanding is grey hairs unto men, and an unspotted life is ripe old age." (Wisdom 4 : 8, 9 — quoted by Strahan).

Apprehension they have in the darkness of night,
 Lest they die in their sleep by the sword of their foe
 For them death overhangs like a vulture in flight,
 205 And they reap much dispeace from the evil they sow. 22-23

So afraid for their lives they will dine far afield,
 In the dark so uneasy they stay in the light ;
 By their fears overpow'ed, ever seeking a shield,
 206 Tense suspicion and dread on them fall like a blight. 23-24

Against God they advanced as with thick studded shield,
 All His will and commandments they scorned and defied
 Against Him all their might they endeavoured to wield,
 207 They were mad with conceit and insane in their pride 25-27

All the ruins of cities destroyed by their sin,
 They rebuilt to enlarge their vainglorious might,
 Their one aim was to feel so secure from within
 208 That with force they might trample on justice and right. 28

But their grasp far exceeds all their power to keep,
 All their gains and their goods and their places secure
 For no shadow they cast and no roots which go deep ;
 209 So on earth their resources can never endure. 29

Like the boughs of a tree which decline in the heat,
 Before fronds become green and the cluster appears ;
 Or like vines which the wind and the hail sorely beat,
 210 That the fruit all unripe is removed as by shears. 30-33

8.205. Cf. Shakespeare : Richard III, Act I, Sc. 4.

"Oh I have passed a miserable night
 So full of fearful dreams, of ugly sights."

8.209. The Hebrew text from v. 29 is very obscure and uncertain.

- All the godless are certain to perish and fall,
 Like corrupters of justice with bribes and with threats,
 For great losses will come and great terrors appal,
 211 So attend to this truth which the sinner forgets ! 34-35

JOB : CHAPTER XVI

Job's Great Appeal to God to bear witness to his righteousness.

- Then said Job " Many things I have heard you repeat,
 All you miserable comforters altering fact.
 Will your talking so turgid be never complete ?
 212 Your mistakes and your lies will you never retract ? 1-3

- Were our places exchanged I could argue like you
 Many strictures could pass on your obdurate mind ;
 I could multiply words, saying much that is true,
 213 In affront shake my head or pretend to be kind. 4-5

- I could dwell on the need for great courage and strength,
 And could pity you much with my plausible speech ;
 I could speak of the sins of your youth at great length,
 214 And could claim in my wisdom the right you to teach. 4-5
 (continued)

- While I speak my great pain has remained unassuaged ;
 Were I silent my sorrow and sadness would stay.
 It is stupid to claim you are wise because aged,
 215 You ignore all the truth of my life and my way. 6

8.212. Cf. " Your ladyship is one of Job's comforters." (Swift : Polite Conversation, III).
 ' Talking so turgid ' : Note the word " Jobation " —

" I wrote the word ' Jobation ' because the word means a long dreary homily or reprimand, and has reference to the tedious rebukes inflicted on the patriarch Job by his too obliging friends." (G. A. Sala : Echoes, September 8, 1884).

- Though my God has deprived me of comfort in life,
 Has removed all my children and plunged me in night
 Though my soul is beset with such sorrow and strife,
 216 Yet my mind mid my mourning He keeps in its light. 7-8
- He has torn up my life by the roots in His wrath ;
 Like a lion which gnashes its teeth in attack,
 My opponent is fixing fierce eyes on my path,
 217 And awaits in the shadow to spring on my back. 9
- Men deride and insult me with word and grimace,
 They assemble together to mock and to jeer,
 Being cowards, they aim their base blows at my face
 218 For they know in advance they have nothing to fear. 10
- For the Lord to the godless me wholly consigned,
 Into hands of the wicked He cast me alone ;
 When at ease in my home and serene in my mind
 219 By the neck was I seized and was smashed like a stone. 11-12
- All His arrows have pierced me His target and mark,
 Now with pitiless pain is my body possessed.
 Yet though vanished my joy, and my life but a spark,
 220 With my "guilt" and my "sin" you are wholly obsessed ! 13
- Like an army besieging a city once great,
 He has stormed at my walls like a giant for strength,
 Until breach after breach has been made and its gate
 221 By the victors is opened and entered at length. 14
- On my body so lean I wear sackcloth for skin ;
 All my hope and my horn in the dust I have laid
 Through my weeping my face is so flushed though so thin,
 222 That the sight in my eyes seems to shrink and to fade. 15-16

S.222. 'horn in the dust'—a figure of speech denoting the extremity of humiliation.
 "Flushed"—Literally "inflamed" or "red." The Hebrew word (found only here in the Bible)
 corresponds to the Arabian term "hamar."—"To be red," whence the term "alhambra"
 meaning "The Red Building."

O thou Earth let my blood not be covered by thee !
 From thy ground let its crying resound among men,
 To proclaim how I died though so blameless and free,
 223 While the cause of my pain lay beyond human ken. 17-18

But behold, in high heaven a Witness for me :
 A great Sponsor attests, though I die I am pure,
 Though I suffer such pain He declares I am free,
 224 That my sin has not caused the great woe I endure. 19

Though contempt is displayed by my friends to my plea
 Unto God I still pray with the tears in my eyes,
 That to me a great Saviour Himself He would be,
 225 And would vindicate me against friends with their lies. 20-21

For but few are my years then I go on my way.
 Like a traveller leaving a place for all time ;
 As I fail in my strength and I mourn all the day,
 226 Lo the grave is awaiting a man in his prime ! 22 with C. 17 : 1

JOB : CHAPTER XVII

Cruel mockery fills all the days of my life,
 And most bitter delusion is certainly mine.
 I am lacking in strength to endure the sad strife,
 227 And no more can I do but lament and repine. 2

8.224. Cf. Tennyson : " Despair."

" Ah yet — I have had some glimmer, at times, in my gloomiest woe,
 Of a God behind all — After all — The great God for aught that I know."

- Wilt Thou give me a pledge to determine my cause ?
 None but Thee O my God can establish my right !
 All deny that I kept all Thy precepts and laws.
- 228 Let not liars exult o'er my losses and plight ! 3-4
- Thou hast made me a by-word to men whom I loved,
 They deride who once praised and rejoiced me to meet.
 As a creature abhorred and avoided and snubbed,
- 229 As a monster from which all the people retreat. 5-6
- Now all sunken and sore are my eyes through my tears,
 My whole body is wasted and worn to a shade,
 All my days are consumed in despair and in fears,
- 230 I am broken in heart, like a leaf I do fade. 7 and 11-12
- So the night becomes day and the day becomes night,
 By the thoughts which arise and recur in my mind :
 When I look but to Sheol to end my sore plight,
- 231 To become my new home as the land of the blind. 13-14
- " My new father art thou " I must say to the pit,
 And " My mother or sister " must say to the worm,
 From all sorrows and lies they alone can acquit.
- 232 Thus my hope in this life is but dust in an urn. 14-16

JOB : CHAPTER XVIII

Bildad's Second Speech in which he paints a picture of the certain and terrible doom of the wicked among whom he includes Job.

- Then said Bildad to Job, " Will you end this vain talk ?
 You reject with contempt what we said for your good.
 Now be silent and hear what we speak and don't mock.
- 233 As your friends we remain though you choose to be rude. 1-2

S.229. " The meaning of this verse (5) is hopelessly uncertain." (McFadyen).
 I have transferred verses 8-10 to the next chapter as they are clearly dislocated as they stand here in C. 17.

You address us each one not like man but like beast.
 We are stupid, malicious and dense in your eyes.
 Your true friends you should know and be thankful at least,
 234 That we stay though so shocked by your impious lies. 3

For the men who are true are repelled by your speech,
 At ungodly conceit all the pious are pained.
 But the righteous continue the sinners to teach.
 235 Ever stronger grow hands which by sin are unstained. C. 17 : 8-10

Do you think the whole world into ruin should fall,
 While you recklessly rave like a madman in rage?
 Do you think that the rocks should revolve like a ball,
 236 While you show disrespect to wise men of great age? 4

Yes! the light of the sinner becomes a mere spark,
 And the flame of his fire soon will falter and fade.
 The bright lamp of his home will be doused by the dark,
 237 At his head will be naught but the shadow and shade. 5-6

All his progress is hindered and comes to a halt,
 All his plotting and planning prepare him for pain
 He is snared in a net by his sin and his fault
 238 Thus frustrated and foiled he will rage and complain. 7-8

Strahan comments on v. 4 :—"The Arabs have the proverbs 'The world will not come to an end for his sake,' and 'The world does not exist for one man.' Even masterful spirits like Canute have to acknowledge their limitations . . . 'The Atlantic' says Sydney Smith 'was roused; Mrs Partington's spirit was up; but I need not tell you that the contest was unequal. The Atlantic beat Mrs Partington. She was excellent at a slop of puddle but should never have meddled with a tempest.

- He is caught by the heel in a trap like a hare,
 When the teeth tightly shut on its victim by day ;
 Like an animal held by the noose of a snare,
 239 He is trapped in a pitfall concealed on his way. 9-10
- He is frightened by fears and he finds no release ;
 He is hunted at heel by the hazards which haunt.
 Like a man who is starving his strength will decrease ;
 240 He is constantly cowed by disasters which daunt. 11-12
- Dread disease is devouring his bones and his skin,
 And the first-born of death all his body and breath.
 He is snatched from security, sordid in sin,
 241 And is marched to the King of all terrors, to Death. 13-14
- To his house evildoers will come seeking loot ;
 On his pastures the brimstone of Sodom will rain.
 He will be like a tree which decays at the root,
 242 And its branches all wither and litter the plain. 15-16
- From the earth his remembrance will vanish for aye,
 And by none in the street will be mentioned by name.
 From the light to the dark he is driven away,
 243 From the world is he chased like a scapegoat of shame. 17-18
- Not a son or a grandson as heir will he leave,
 Not a soul in his house will survive or remain.
 To the West his dread doom will be hard to believe,
 244 While the East it will fill with much horror and pain. 19-20

S.240. Cf. Shakespeare : King Richard III, Act 5, Sc. III.

" By the Apostle Paul, shadows to-night,
 Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard,
 Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers."

S.241. " The first-born of death "—referring possibly to the disease which afflicted Job.

S.242. The meaning of v. 15 is quite uncertain in the Hebrew. " His house shall be haunted by ghosts." (McFadyen). " His home shall be infested with disease." (Moffatt).

To my warning give heed and repent while you may,
 And beware of the hypocrite's folly and fate.
 The ungodly will fall like a house made of clay,
 245 And the atheist's life will be smashed like a plate. 21

JOB : CHAPTER XIX

Job's Second Reply to Bildad in which he denies the false charges made, and in which he expresses his confidence that God will finally vindicate his good character.

Then said Job, " You continue to torture my soul,
 By accusing me falsely of sin and of pride.
 You assert that the pain and the losses I thole,
 246 Are the punishment due which I ought to abide. 1-2

Why persist in such charges so shameful and rash ?
 Why attempt to confuse me with words so untrue ?
 With the pain of my flesh I endure like a lash
 247 Allegations denied but repeated by you. 3

Not a man can be perfectly sinless and pure :
 No such claim have I made as you falsely declare.
 Many sinners far worse do not have to endure,
 248 Such afflictions as mine which in fact are most rare. 4

Let it be that I sinned you are still in the wrong,
 For my sin is unlike any sins you suggest :
 Me alone it concerns and it cannot belong
 249 To my dealings with others which were of the best. 4

S.246. Cf. Cowper : Timepiece

" No none are clear and none than we more guilty ; but where all stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts of wrath obnoxious, God may choose His mark, may punish if He please the less, to warn the more malignant."

Your insulting reproaches I wholly disclaim,
 All your lying attacks I refuse to endure.
 Are you haughtily hoping to tarnish my name,
 250 At a time when you find me afflicted and poor ? 5

It is God, understand, though I be without guilt,
 Who me caught in His net and entangled me fast,
 Though my life and my work on His truth have been built,
 251 Overthrown and undone I am helpless at last. 6

I protest at the wrong, but He heeds not my plea ;
 I appeal for His help, but injustice remains.
 You appear on the scene and you claim that you see !
 252 You assail me with lies, for you suffer no pains. 7

He has blocked all my way and has darkened my path ;
 Has deprived me of honour the crown of my head.
 He has torn my whole life to small shreds in His wrath ;
 253 Though alive in the flesh I would rather be dead. 8-9 and 10a

He has plucked up my hope like a tree by its roots,
 And His anger has kindled at me without cause.
 He accounts me as one of His foes who disputes,
 254 The authority, goodness and truth of His laws. 10b-11

Now His troops are advancing on me in a swarm ;
 They are bent on besieging my body and soul ;
 All their forces and weapons against me they form,
 255 I am left all alone with no friend to console. 12-13a

I am shunned by my kinsmen, my neighbours and friends ;
 They ignore me as one whom they never have known.
 Even servants despise me as one who offends,
 256 I am held by my guests as if dead like a stone. 13b-14-15

S.253. The words 'honour' and 'crown' are used poetically here to denote the social esteem in which Job was formerly held.

When I call for my servant my voice he ignores ;
 Ere he hear I must beg and myself must demean,
 My appearance and presence my wife so deplores,
 257 That I dwell by myself like a leper unclean. 16-17

Even children deride me with insult and jeer ;
 When they see me approach at a distance they mock.
 Former friends me forget and from me they keep clear ;
 258 All the folk that I loved are as hard as a rock. 18-19

I am worn to the bone ; I am thin as a rake,
 And my skin loosely hangs like a cloth on a frame,
 I am losing my teeth and I shiver and shake,
 259 And yet such is the man whom you harshly defame ! 20

Have some pity my friends if my friends you would be,
 Let compassion be felt for a man in despair.
 For the hand of my God has descended on me.
 260 Will you hurt me still more ? Do you think that is fair ? 21-22

How I wish that my words were in writing preserved,
 Were engraven on rock and in letters of lead,
 To declare that my sorrow I never deserved,
 261 That in life I was just till I joined all the dead. 23-24

I believe that my God will uphold my good name ;
 That an Advocate lives who will stand on this dust.
 Though I die but a stranger to fortune and fame,
 262 Yet my soul will see God for in Him is my trust. 25-26

8.259. The now proverbial expression (in v. 20) "I am excaped by the skin of my teeth" is in itself quite meaningless and is based on the uncertainty of the Hebrew text here. I have adopted Duhm's interpretation "My teeth are all gone."

8.262. The Hebrew text of vv. 25-27 is very uncertain but what is certain is that here the rendering should be 'Vindicator' or 'Advocate' rather than 'Redeemer.' "Two simple changes one of which has the indirect support of LXX, give the words Witness and Sponsor, which bring the passage into striking connection with C. 16 : 19, and produce a remarkably fine climax." (McFadyen).

How I yearn for His coming to save me from " friends " !
 How I pine in my heart for His favour once more !
 He alone can me save ere my memory ends,
 263 He alone can my health and my comfort restore. 27

But if you will persist in repeating your lies,
 And in finding in me the root-cause of my woe,
 Be afraid lest the Lord should you soundly chastise,
 264 Lest by means of His sword He His justice should show ! 28-29

JOB : CHAPTER XX AND CHAPTER XXIV : 18-21, 24

*The Second Speech of Zophar to Job in which he accuses Job
 of being hypocritical and of using insulting speech and in
 which he warns Job of the doom of the wicked.*

To him Zophar replied, " I have heard your rebuke,
 So aroused is my heart that I needs must reply ;
 I am shocked at your pride both in word and in look,
 265 When you speak without sense and then give us the lie." 1-3

From of old has the singing of sinners been poor,
 From their laughter and mirth into woe were they hurled.
 So the hypocrite's hope is the harbinger sure
 266 Of the judgment of God on the men of this world. 4-5

Though the sinner's success should resemble a tow'r,
 And the top of his head seems to touch the high cloud ;
 At the peak of his fame he will crash from his pow'r,
 267 For destruction awaits the deceitful and proud. 6

3.265. The translation of the Hebrew of verses 1-3 is very difficult and the renderings of Moffat, McFadyen and R.S.V. as well as Strahan's comments may be compared in proof of this fact. This stanza gives what I believe to be the general meaning of the passage.

He is swept from his place like a stick by a flood,
 All his vineyards are ruined by heat or by cold,
 Or by hailstorms or torrents of water and mud,
 268 For a curse has been laid on his land and his gold. (C. 24 : 18-19)

Then his name is forgot in the streets of the town,
 His renown disappears evermore from the light,
 Like a tree that is dead when by tempest blown down,
 269 For no help did he give to poor widow or mite. C. 24 : 20-21

Men will ask "Is he dead?" "Has he flitted abroad?"
 He completely departs like a dream of the night.
 Not a trace will be left of deniers of God,
 270 They will utterly perish from thought and from sight. 7-9

So remember that sinners soon vanish and die ;
 Though exalted, they droop like the mallow at morn :
 Retribution will fall like a bolt from the sky,
 271 It will strike like the sickle which severs the corn. C. 24 : 24

Then their children will face the demands of the poor,
 And be forced to return all the wealth that they stole
 So for sins of their parents the children endure
 272 Many sorrows and hardships with none to condole. 10

Yes the sinner will suffer for sins of his youth,
 The effects will remain when he goes to the grave.
 The demand of the Law is an eye or a tooth,
 273 And applies to them all though so boastful and brave. 11

Remarking that these verses (C. 24 : 18-21 and 24) are irony on Job's part, Davidson has left them in C. 24, but they are clearly dislocated here and should form part of Zophar's speech not Job's. "The ironical flavour is not perceptible and it is better to regard the fragment as the most conventional part of a safe chapter which has been substituted for Job's heretical and dangerous attack upon providence." (Strahan). Though Moffat has not transposed them I have preferred to do so.

Though the savour of sin be to him like a sweet,
Which he keeps on his tongue for as long as he can,
It will sicken his soul like some poisonous meat,
274 Like the venom of asps in the blood of a man. 12-16

All the wealth that he seized he is forced to repay
When deprived by the Lord of his ill-gotten gains.
His great losses will fill him with fear and dismay,
275 His transactions will fail notwithstanding his pains. 15 and 18

The fair prospects of meadows and rivers and streams,
The abundance of butter and honey and milk,
All will cease to be his and will vanish like dreams,
276 He will lose all his goods and wear sackcloth for silk. 17-18

He oft stole by deceit or by force from the poor,
A small house which he never erected or owned,
And great hardships compelled them to face and endure,
277 For his greed and his theft he deserved to be stoned ! 19

His rapacity missed or ignored not a jot ;
He annexed all that came within reach or control.
His possessions will pass or will perish and rot
278 Not a thing will be left out of all that he stole. 20-21

In the fullness of wealth he will fall into need,
All his riches will vanish like mist of the morn,
All the evil he sowed he will reap and with speed,
279 The oppressed him will treat with derision and scorn. 22

S.275. f. "' Whom the gods love die young ' was said of yore but never in Israel where long life was supposed to be Heaven's seal upon virtue, and premature death its judgment upon sin. Here as elsewhere Job's friends are the representatives of the orthodox popular doctrine which the poet is seeking to undermine." (Strahan).

- While the sinner rejoices in safety and strength,
 Lo the fury and anger of God will assail,
 And the sinner will fall by an arrow at length
 280 If the sword he escapes when misfortunes prevail. 23-24
- It will pass through his back and emerge at his breast ;
 He will fall and the terror of death will descend.
 By deep darkness of doom will his soul be possessed,
 281 Thus the life of the sinner will reach its dread end. 25
- So the fire never lit by mere man will consume,
 Both the sinner and all that he wrongly acquired.
 Thus shall heaven reveal all his guilt by his doom,
 282 Thus shall earth see fulfilled what it long had desired. 26-27
- So his life and his wealth disappear from the world,
 In the day divine wrath has prescribed for their end,
 The impenitent man into darkness is hurled,
 283 Pay attention, O Job, and your ways quickly mend ! 28-29

JOB : CHAPTER XXI

Job's Second Reply to Zophar in which he makes a fierce attack on the theory that prosperity is the mark of godliness and in which he shows that the wicked often prosper and are well while the righteous often suffer adversity and pain. (see note below).

- To all this replied Job, " If you listen to me,
 With attention and care it will help to console,
 For I differ from you and have eyes that can see,
 284 You can talk as you like but are blind like a mole ! 1-3

Concerning chapters 21 to 27, Strahan has made this true and most important observation :
 " A disturbing hand has been at work bringing the too audacious poem into some measure
 of conformity with orthodoxy and thereby marring the beauty of the most symmetrical
 composition in the Old Testament."

Will you note not to man but to God I complain ?
 And I feel very hurt and why not I may ask ?
 You must listen to me though I give you much pain !
 285 Lay you hand on your mouth while I take you to task. 4-5

I am filled with dismay when these facts I recall,
 And sore shuddering seizes my sorrowing soul.
 Of these things you pretend to know nothing at all.
 286 You should ponder them well ere you try to console. 6

Can you tell why the wicked oft live to be old,
 And enjoy the best health and great riches and pow'r ?
 Why their offspring abound with much silver and gold,
 287 Why the rod of the Lord does not cause them to cow'r ? 7-9

From their fields a rich harvest they frequently have,
 And their profit is great from the things that they sell.
 All their bulls duly breed and their cows safely calve ;
 288 All their scheming and plotting and planning go well. 10

In their fields like a flock all their little ones meet,
 Where they sing, as they play, to the sound of the lyre,
 Or a roundelay dance to the tambourine's beat,
 289 Being all gaily dressed in the richest attire. 11-12

To the tune of the pipe they make merry and sing,
 And they finish their days in great comfort and ease,
 And to Sheol go down without caring a thing.
 290 All the years that they live they just do as they please. 12-13

S.289. "The timbrel is the tambourine." (Davidson).

S.290. The organ (in v. 12) is more correctly 'the pipe' which "according to Nowack and Benzinger was the Bagpipe." (Strahan). Cf. C. 30 : 31, Gen. 4 : 21, Isaiah 5 : 12).

Yes, to God they did say in their blasphemous pride,
 "We desire not the knowledge of Thee and Thy ways,
 So depart we defy Thee whate'er may betide,
 291 For no profit there is in this praying and praise." 14-15

Though with impious words they renounce all His will,
 And behave as if masters of fortune and fate,
 With good things all their houses He often doth fill,
 292 Yet my soul all the counsel of sinners doth hate!
 16 with C. 22 : 17-18

Doth He often extinguish their lamp and their light?
 Doth He often assail them with sorrow and loss?
 Doth He often afflict them with pain day and night?
 293 Doth He often compel them to carry a cross? 17

Doth He often beset them with judgment and wrath?
 Doth He often them drive like mere straws in a gale?
 Doth He often them scatter like chaff on a path?
 294 Doth He often them cause to be ill or to fail? 18

You reply that the punishment falls on their kin,
 To the third or the fourth generations in fact.
 But transgressors themselves should atone for their sin,
 295 And their comfort and goods not continue intact. 19

They themselves and not others should reap what they sow,
 From the cup of the anger of God they should drink,
 For they leave all concern for their kin or their foe,
 296 From the moment of death when they pass this life's brink.
 20-21

Will you venture to teach even God what is right,
 When you know that He judges the angels on high?
 Does your knowledge excel even His who in might,
 297 Is controlling the Earth from His throne in the sky? 22

S.291 Coverdale's rendering of v. 15 is noted by Davidson — "What maner of felowe is the Almightie that we shulde serve Him?"

No distinction appears twixt the good and the bad,
 In this life in the matter of sorrow and pain.
 While the righteous are mourning the sinners are glad ;
 298 You can see for yourselves for the facts are so plain. (addition)

For the death may be sudden of one who seems well,
 In prosperity, peace and the prime of his life ;
 When his health appears sound and his powers excel,
 299 He departs to the grief of his children and wife. 23-24

But another departs broken-hearted and ill
 Having suffered in life tribulation and pain,
 Though he lived unto God and obeyed all His will.
 300 All are equal in death and to dust turn again. 25-26

Oh I know what you think ! But you do me great wrong,
 By asserting I suffer for sins of my youth.
 Consolation most vain when for comfort I long,
 301 For your arguments false have a mixture of truth ! 27

Do you ask " Can you say where the tyrants now dwell,
 All the godless oppressors of righteous and poor ?"
 Have you never yet asked them who travel and tell,
 302 What they saw of their "fate" which you think is so sure ? 28-29

They report " Oft the wicked from woe are quite free,
 In calamitous days they are wholly immune,
 And they live in great ease for all persons to see,
 303 And continue to prosper for many a moon." 30-31

Who rebukes them for sin and misdeeds to their face ?
 Many mourners attend their great funeral rite ;
 They regard them as ornaments rare of the race !
 304 They must rest from their sins amid scenes that are bright ! 31-33

For what reason, I pray, do you utter such lies,
 Which you call consolation to comfort my soul ?
 Are the facts and the truth wholly hid from your eyes ?
 305 Of your senses and wits have you lost all control ? 34

PART THREE

THE BOOK OF JOB

Chapters 22 to 31 inclusive

The Third Speech of Eliphaz to Job in which, infuriated by Job's rebuke and refusal to admit that he has deserved his suffering, Eliphaz hurls cruel and false accusations against Job's conduct and character.

Can you benefit God by your conduct or praise ?
Only man any good can derive from your deeds.
Do you think the Almighty can gain in some ways,
306 That your righteousness somehow fulfils His real needs ? 1-3

Does He blame you for faults in your cultus or rite ?
Do defects in devotion occasion His wrath ?
No, you sin when your conduct opposes His light
307 So your practice produces this pain in your path. 4

All the woe that you suffer is due to your guilt ;
Very great is your sin when such sorrow and loss
Have befallen your life which we thought had been built,
308 On the law of your Maker who fashions your cross. 5

You have fleeced a poor man by high int'rest on loan,
And made naked poor debtors by seizing their clothes.
You have given the hungry no food but a stone
309 And no water to drink to your suffering foes. 7

When the widows came seeking employment or aid,
You have sent them away in their hunger and need,
While on arms of the orphans great burdens you laid,
310 You refused all relief when for help they did plead. 9

You have done all these deeds although wealthy and strong ;
Like the plutocrats mighty who own all the land ;
By abusing their riches they often do wrong
311 And forget that possessions are fickle as sand. 8

For these reasons your road is surrounded with snares,
 All beset is your life with great terrors and fears.
 Not a thing in its path the fierce flood ever spares,
 312 So the light of your life has been darkened by tears. 10-11

Is not God the Almighty in heaven on high ?
 You behold how exalted the summit of stars,
 Yet say you " What of earth does He know or espy ?
 313 Can He judge things aright when deep darkness debars ? 12-13

He is veiled by the clouds that He cannot discern ;
 So remote does He walk on His heaven's high vault."
 Will you take this old way without thought or concern,
 314 Which all sinners have chosen to cover their fault ? 14-15

As they recklessly lived, prematurely they died,
 Like a house on the sand undermined by a flood.
 Without God in the world all His will they denied ;
 315 They declared " No enquiry makes God after blood." 16-17

So the righteous rejoiced at the fate of the bad,
 Them the innocent mocked and subjected to scorn,
 Saying " Gone are our foes who were godless and mad ;
 316 What they left is destroyed other sinners to warn." 19-20

Now make peace with your God and submit to His will,
 If you wish to succeed and your health to regain ;
 From His mouth His instruction receive and fulfil ;
 317 Take His words to your heart nor forget them again. 21-22

S.313. This preposterous charge of Deism against Job is made because to the Hebrews it was scarcely distinguishable from downright Atheism.

S.315. I have transferred v. 18 to C. 21 : 18.

- If you turn to your God with a penitent mind,
 If from hearth and from home you all evil remove,
 Then in God you will joy and will find Him most kind,
 318 You will lift up your face and His goodness will prove. 23 and 26
- If you lay in the dust all the gold that you own,
 If the treasures of Ophir you throw in the stream,
 If you treat them no better than refuse or stone ;
 319 If the Lord your true silver and gold you esteem ; 24-25
- When you pray He will hear and an answer will make,
 You will pay all your vows and obey all His will,
 He will prosper your plans and you never forsake
 320 And your life with His favour and sunshine will fill. 27-28
- He abases the haughty and humbles the proud,
 But the meek and the lowly He raises and saves.
 He protects all the righteous from evil's dark cloud,
 321 And the clean-handed man from disaster's wild waves. 29-30

JOB : CHAPTER XXIII

Job's Third Speech to Eliphaz in which he makes a trenchant attack on the notion that the prosperous are well-pleasing to God. He exposes the sins of parasites, exploiters, tyrants and oppressors of the poor.

- Then said Job, " My complaint is still bitter to-day,
 For His hand is yet heavy in spite of my groan.
 How I long to discover His presence, and way,
 322 To present my appeal at the foot of His throne ! " 1-3
- I would state my whole case and would reason at length,
 I would hear His reply to my soul in distress,
 I would learn the true facts and be given new strength,
 323 He would free me from fears and from doubts which oppress. 4-5

Would He use His great might and reject my appeal ?
 Not at all ! He would hear and give heed to my plea,
 He would stamp my true character then with His seal
 324 And acquit me for aye by His righteous decree. 6-7

When I look to the East He is hidden from sight
 And my search in the West for His presence in vain,
 In the North, but my gaze on Him cannot alight
 325 He is screened in the South though my eyesight I strain. 8-9

Yet my life He well knows though He shows me His wrath ;
 To His steps have my feet closely kept in His way,
 Without swerving I followed His plan and His path,
 326 The commandments He gave I have tried to obey. 10a, 11-12

If my life He should try ere it reaches its end,
 I would be like the gold be which is tried in the fire.
 All the charges you bring the Almighty offend ;
 327 They are slanders to suit what your doctrines require. 10b

But unchanging is God : who can alter His mind ?
 What He wills that He does, and Him none can forbid.
 He will do unto me as His will is inclined,
 328 He appoints many things which from me He has hid. 13-14

For this reason I quail at His presence and pow'r,
 At the thought of His will I am filled with great dread ;
 He has made my sad heart to be fainter each hour,
 329 As His mystery deepens and covers my head. 15-17

JOB : CHAPTER XXIV

- Why are times not appointed by God to enquire ?
 And His friends never see any days of assize ?
 For the wicked remove all the landmarks with fire,
 330 They are robbing the poor and ignoring their cries. 1-2
- They are seizing the sheep as they feed on the knowe,
 And the ass from the orphan they heartlessly drive.
 From the widow they take for a debt her one cow,
 331 And poor mothers of babes they most harshly deprive. 2b-3 and 9
- They evict from their homes all the needy and poor,
 Who some shelter must seek from the wind and the cold.
 Then they roam like wild asses the desert and moor
 332 Seeking food for the helpless, the young and the old. 4-5
- To make bread they must gather some corn from the field,
 To allay their sore need in the darkness of night.
 They must steal from the rich of the vineyard's rich yield,
 333 Lest they perish through hunger so sore is their plight. 6 and 10b
- Without clothing at night in the cold they must lie,
 Unprotected from wind and from rain on the hills ;
 They must cling to the rocks for some shelter on high,
 334 And be soaked by the rain when their refuge it fills. 7-8

The whole of chapter 24 as it stands has little relevance to the problem of the Book of Job and there is general agreement among scholars that Merx's theory is a sound one, namely that it has been substituted for a too strong indictment by Job of the providential order. Strahan considered this as "almost certainly correct." while McFadyen wrote "The last verse of the chapter, v. 25 suggests that it contained a fierce and seemingly unanswerable challenge of the moral order. In its present form, however, it is harmless enough -- a few descriptive sketches of certain outcasts and malefactors. Some scholars therefore believe it to be a later pious substitute for a too audacious original."

- They must toil in the fields 'neath the lash of their foes,
 They must work without clothing or food though they die.
 And extract all the oil from the olives in rows,
 335 Or the winepress must tread neath the heat of the sky. 10a-11

JOB : CHAPTER XXX : 2-8

(Inserted within Chapter XXIV)

- Then their hands become weak through their hunger and want,
 And at length the last spark of their strength disappears
 When they fall to the ground wholly helpless and gaunt,
 336 They are panting with pain and their eyes full of tears.
 C. 30 : 2, 3a

- Even saltwort and mallow they gather to eat,
 And the roots in the desert they gnaw for their food,
 Without broom for their fires they would lack any heat,
 337 And they weave it for shelter though scanty and rude.
 C. 30 : 3b-4

- How they grope mid the wastes of the wilderness rocks,
 And like beasts they are driven from dwellings of men !
 They are cursed and insulted like thieves in the stocks,
 338 They are hounded and chased like the fox from his den.
 C. 30 : 5-6

- Thus they live in the wastes, in ravine and in cave,
 Where like beasts in the bushes they couple and roam ;
 They are treated like felons or madmen who rave,
 339 They are scourged from their land, from their hearth and
 their home. C. 30 : 7-8

- From the victims in cities and towns there are groans,
 All the sick and the hungry and wounded seek aid.
 But the rich and the wicked are deaf to their moans,
 340 Even God seems unmindful of them who have prayed.
 C. 24 : 12

9.336 f. As it stands the passage C. 30 : 2-8, is clearly misplaced and is inserted here in C. 24 to which it seems more appropriate. The Hebrew text is very obscure in places and this explains the various renderings in the prose versions.

JOB : CHAPTER XXIV

- There are others preferring the darkness to light,
 Who ignore all the paths of the righteous and true,
 Who rebel against God and their neighbour's just right,
 341 Neither working nor wanting, a criminal crew. 13
- Thus the murderer strikes at the rich or the poor,
 And the housebreaking thief is abroad in the night ;
 The adulterer slinks in disguise to the whore,
 342 In the dark and returns ere the dawning of light. 14-15 - 16a
- They are lovers of darkness and haters of light,
 For the light is to them as the shadow of death ;
 They turn night into day and turn wrong into right,
 343 For the habits of sin are their food and their breath. 16-17
- The Almighty permits them to live and be strong,
 When despairing of life, He restores them to health,
 He security grants for a life that is long :
 344 He is watching them well as they wallow in wealth ! 22-23
- These are facts I declare which you cannot deny.
 It is useless for you to explain them away ;
 You can say what you like but not prove that I lie.
 345 Nor can show that there's nothing in all that I say. 25

C. 24. 18-21 and 24 — transferred to C. 20.

8.344. In this stanza I have adopted the meaning as given in R.S.V. (to which Moffatt's rendering is similar). McFadyen's translation, agreeing with Ewald's is quite different. The Hebrew text is very difficult to translate.

JOB : CHAPTER XXV AND CHAPTER XXVI : 5-14

The Third Speech of Bildad to Job in which he maintains that the fact of suffering in itself proves the guilt of the sufferer and that although all men are sinners some are greater sinners than others, and therefore are severely punished.

Then said Bildad to Job, " So you say you are just !

How can man before God ever claim to be pure ?

How can sufferers say that in God is their trust,

346 When the proof of their guilt is the pain they endure ? " 1 and 4

In its beauty the moon is not spotless though bright,

And not clean are the glittering stars in His eyes.

How much less can a man, a mere maggot, be right !

347 How much less can a worm make a claim to be wise ! 5-6

For with God are dominion and fear and great might ;

He maintains perfect peace in His heavens on high,

Who can number His armies or put them to flight

348 Since His ambush has cast rebel saints from the sky ? 2-3

All the shades of the giants who fought against God,

Are imprisoned in chains neath the floor of the sea,

Where they helplessly struggle beneath His great rod,

349 As they seek, like the creatures of earth, to be free. C. 26 : 5-6

All of Sheol's deep gloom and Abaddon's grim face

Is unveiled to the sight of His All-Seeing Eye.

The Aurora and stars of the Boreas race,

350 He suspends, like the Earth, in the void of the sky. C. 26 : 6-7

S.348. A reference to the rebellious angels who with Satan at their head, were cast out of heaven (Cf. Milton's *Paradise Lost*).

All the waters He keeps in the clouds He has made
 That the weight does not tear them to deluge the world ;
 And He covers the face of the moon with His shade ;
 351 At His throne all the clouds and the mists are unfurled. C. 26 : 8-9

On the face of the deep He has arched a great dome,
 To confine and distinguish the darkness from light.
 All the pillars of heaven and sea with its foam,
 352 Are astounded and quake at His thunder and might. C. 26 : 10-11

By His word He subdued raging waves of the sea ;
 By His wisdom He smote the great Dragon of Earth ;
 By His breath He the heavens made fair as can be,
 353 By His hand the swift serpent He kept in its berth. C. 26 : 12-13

The mere fringe is all this of His wisdom and might,
 But the faintest of whispers of Him we can hear,
 In the earth and the sea, in the darkness and light :
 354 Of His might the full force to no human is clear ! C. 26 : 14

JOB : CHAPTER XXVI : 1-4 AND

CHAPTER XXVII : 1-6 AND 12

*The Third Speech of Job to Bildad in which he ironically
 praises the comfort and eloquence of his speech and stoutly
 maintains his righteousness.*

Then said Job, " What a help have you been to the weak !
 What support to the arm of a powerless man !
 What wise counsel you give to the simple and meek !
 355 How abundant your knowledge of God and His plan ! " C. 26 - 1-3

Who has helped you to make such an eloquent speech ?
 Who inspired you to talk in such comforting ways ?
 Who enabled your brains such great knowledge to reach ?
 356 Who denies you the fulness of wonder and praise ? C. 26 : 4

As God lives who deprived me of justice and right,
 And with darkness of night has embittered my soul,
 I declare as He grants me my breath and my light,
 357 That no lie will I speak until death o'er me roll. C. 27 : 2-4

God forbid I should falsely admit you are right !
 Till I die I maintain I am righteous and just.
 I repeat my complaint, to my claim I hold tight,
 358 No reproach knows my heart and in God do I trust. 3. 27 : 5-6

All my life and my works you have seen with your eyes,
 You accuse me of sin and my conduct you blame.
 You false witness do bear when you utter such lies,
 359 Wholly mad you become when you seek to defame. C. 27 : 12

JOB : CHAPTER XXVII : 7-23

*The Third Speech of Zophar in which he accuses Job of being
 a self-righteous hypocrite who thoroughly has deserved his
 losses and pains.*

Then said Zophar to Job, " You continue to shock !
 As the wicked or fool may my enemy fare !
 For the godless are hopeless however they mock,
 360 In the day of His judgment the Lord will not spare. 7-8

When adversity strikes and the hypocrite prays,
 For relief from his losses and cure of his pain,
 Will the Lord hear a man who transgresses His ways ?
 361 Surely God all such pleas will regard with disdain. 9-10

C. 27 : 7-23. Kennicott was the first to suggest that these verses had been taken from Zophar's speech and attributed to Job in order to make him speak what his friends asserted to be "sound doctrine."

I will teach you concerning the justice of God
 In its working His hand I will plainly disclose.
 What the wicked and sinners endure from His rod,
 362 How He punishes tyrants, transgressors and foes. 11-13

If their children should live they will fall in the fight,
 They will lack daily bread and of hunger will die ;
 They will perish of plague and be buried at night,
 363 And for mourning their widows will heave but a sigh. 14-15

Though they heap up their silver like dust of the ground,
 Have abundance of clothing like cartloads of clay,
 Yet the righteous their wealth will divide all around,
 364 And their garments be worn by the guiltless by day. 16-17

Like the spider's frail web is the house that they make,
 Like the shelter which covers the watchman by night ;
 When they sleep they are rich but are poor when they wake,
 365 For their wealth and possessions all vanish from sight. 18-19

Overtaken by fears like a flood in the day,
 And affrighted by dreams of great tempests by night,
 When a wind from the East seems to lift them away,
 366 They are swept from their place and deprived of their might. 20-21

Without mercy will God them attack at the last,
 And then fain would they flee to escape from His hand.
 Mid the hisses of men retribution comes fast ;
 367 When they fall men applaud and them drive from the land. 22-23

JOB : CHAPTER XXVIII
THE SEARCH FOR WISDOM

Do you know where to find hidden Wisdom on earth ?
Can you tell where the Knowledge of God can be found ?
In this world, though so large, there is sorrowful dearth,
368 Of real Wisdom and Knowledge where riches abound. 12 and 20

The white silver is taken by men from the mine,
And the iron they smelt from the ore of the ground,
The bright gold from the dust they can wash and refine,
369 And the copper extract from the rock so profound. 1-2

How they search the whole earth for the things they desire !
How they toil as they dig into depths of great gloom !
They descend all regardless of flood or of fire,
370 The deep shafts they have made which are often their tomb. 3-4a

There suspended by ropes they are working below,
In the darkness they grope as they toil day and night,
They are seeking for gems as they swing to and fro,
371 Though oppressed by the heat and deprived of the light. 3b and 4bc

By the sweat of their brow they must win from the soil,
Daily bread and all else that they need or desire,
So a harvest they seek in the mines by their toil,
372 In the gloom and the depths which are raked as by fire. 5 and 6b

Through the mountains they bore as if seeking their roots,
And deep channels they cut to control all the streams.
Like the men who are thirsty for water or fruits,
373 They are searching for riches to match their great dreams. 9, 10ab, 11ab

" The philosophical idea of the poem rests on the conception of the 'nous' in the cosmos as the highest and most precious good which man can neither achieve by labour nor purchase with gold, of which Nature, animate or living, knows nothing ; it is Reason which reigns in natural law and which God studied and used when He created the world. The author was certainly acquainted with the Greek idea as Aristobulus or Philo, and may have lived in the third century B.C." (Duhm — quoted by Strahan).

In the place by the eye of the falcon unseen,
 In the depth undiscerned by the vulture and hawk,
 Where the lion and other wild beasts have not been,
 374 There the miner is digging or drilling the rock. 7-8

So he seeks to discover things hidden and rare,
 By the strength of his arm to bring jewels to light,
 But the dwelling of Wisdom he cannot unbare,
 375 Her abode is concealed in the darkness of night. (added)

Who has ever detected the way to her place,
 Or determined her greatness by measure or price?
 Who has heard her sweet voice or beheld her fair face,
 376 Unto Wisdom attained by his wealth or device? 13

Where shall Wisdom be sought and be found by mere man?
 Give reply O great Earth! Give reply O great Sea!
 Come declare to mankind the great truth if you can,
 377 And unlock this great secret if you have the key. 12 and 20

But their answer is clear though they utter no cry:
 "Not in us is the knowledge of God to be found,
 Nor can silver or gold though of Ophir, e'er buy,
 378 This great Wisdom so precious, so rare and renowned." 14-16a

For the value of Wisdom is greater than gold,
 Than the diamonds and beryls which dazzle the eye,
 Than the rubies and sapphires and treasures untold,
 379 Than the jewels and gems which all money can buy. 16b-17

Job, C. 28: Generally regarded as a later addition.

S.377 f. Cf. Tennyson —

"I found Him not in world or sun,
 Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye:
 Nor through the questions men may try,
 The petty cobwebs we have spun:"

(*In Memoriam*, 122)

S.378. Cf. Omar Khayyam: Stanzas 31-33.

Of the crystal or coral no mention is made,
 For the value of Wisdom all rubies exceeds,
 Ethiopia's topaz is, even as jade,
 380 Not a match for great Wisdom which man ever needs. 18-19

Where can Wisdom be found? How can man become wise?
 Seeing Wisdom is hid from the birds of the air,
 And concealed from the sight of the sharpest of eyes?
 381 Can no person or creature this secret declare? 20-21

When no answer is made there is heard a great voice,
 From Destruction and Death an avowal most clear:
 "While you live is the time to make wisdom your choice;
 382 We have heard but a rumour of Wisdom down here." 21-22

Only God can reveal the true Wisdom to man,
 By His grace can direct him to seek and to find;
 Not a man by mere nature can fathom His plan
 383 To become a great Saviour and Light of mankind. 23-24

When He made this great world and established its laws,
 When He formed all the forces of wind and of rain,
 When He settled the law of effect and of cause
 384 In the air and the water, the mountain and plain. 25-26

He revealed unto man that His life's highest aim
 Is to glorify God and His favour enjoy
 By obeying His will and by praising His name.
 385 By departing from sin understanding employ! 27-28

3.382. Destruction, i.e., Abaddon, a synonym for Sheol. Death — the powers which rule the underworld. Strahan quotes Bousset —

"Even if we unfurled all the sails of our knowledge, and embarked on the great ocean of facts, and if we flew on the wings of fancy to the summit of all being, we should not reach the limits where the mystery of infinity was revealed."

(*The Faith of a Modern Protestant*).

JOB : CHAPTER XXIX

Job's Great and Final Defence and Appeal in Three Chapters (29-31) in which describes his happy and upright and charitable past life, his present sufferings mental as well as physical, and his readiness to have his whole moral life undergo the closest scrutiny. He emphatically repudiates the false charges made against him by his 'friends.'

THE MEMORIES OF JOB

I am longing to be as in months that are past,
 As in days when my God was protecting my life,
 When His lamp o'er my head its fair radiance cast,
 386 And I walked by His light through the dark and the strife. 1-3

I am longing to be as in days of my prime,
 When the friendship of God was so real in my home,
 When my children were small (what a wonderful time !)
 387 When with them and my wife oft in fields I did roam. 4-5

When my farms were aflowing with honey and milk,
 When for me from the rock came abundance of oil,
 When my clothing was made of the finest of silk,
 388 When my servants all shared in the fruit of their toil. 6

When with Elders I went to the gate of the town,
 On the civic affairs common counsel to take,
 They would all be upstanding till I had sat down ;
 389 With respect all the younger withdrew for my sake. 7-8

S.386. f. This (C. 29) is "one of the most beautiful things of the kind in any literature" (Strahan)
 Cf. Tennyson — "This is the truth the poet sings . . ."

- In my presence the princes desisted from speech,
 All the nobles were silent like men who are mute :
 They all waited for me to give counsel and teach ;
 390 At the end they applauded with hand and with foot. 9-10 and 21b
- They awaited my words as the land awaits rain,
 When the earth before Spring is all hardened and dry.
 When I stopped they in silence desired to remain,
 391 As if nothing was left to be said or to try. 21a, 22-23
- When perplexed by their problems they saw that I laughed,
 All their hope was restored by the light on my face,
 For they knew I was ready the answer to draft,
 392 And the policy fix for the good of the place. 24-25
- Like a monarch commanding his troops in the field,
 I directed them all as their leader and head.
 For my counsel prevailed and great evils had healed,
 393 I was trusted by all for I meant what I said. 25
- At the sound of my voice all the people were glad,
 At the sight of my face they expressed their esteem,
 For the poor oft I saved from the hand of the bad,
 394 And the orphans and helpless from want did redeem. 11-12
- All the sick and the perishing blessed me for aid,
 And the heart of the widow I caused to rejoice,
 For the garments in which I was richly arrayed,
 395 Were my kindness and justice by hand and by voice. 13-14

S.391. Strahan quotes the Illad (111, 221 f) —

" But when he speaks, what elocution flows !
 Soft as the fleeces of descending snows,
 The copious accents fall, with easy art ;
 Melting they fall and sink into the heart."

I was eyes to the blind, I was feet to the lame,
 To the poor I was father in time of distress,
 I would be their defence though I knew not their name,
 396 And them save from the hands of all those who oppress. 15-17

So I said "In my nest I my life will renew,
 Like the phoenix my years multiply like the sand,
 Have my roots in the stream, on my boughs the night dew,
 397 With my fame and my bow ever new in my hand." 18-20

JOB : CHAPTER XXX

Job's Present Sufferings and Humiliation

The Almighty now leaves me to suffer the shame,
 Of ungodly and impudent men who deride,
 Who with smirks and grimaces and jests me defame,
 398 And who strike at my face and who kick me aside. C. 16 : 9-11

For at present pert youths in vain song me revile,
 As a term of contempt they make use of my name,
 They abhor and me treat like a creature most vile,
 399 At a distance they spit in disgust and defame. 1a, 9-10

So my God has undone both my life and my bow,
 He my banner has flung at my feet on the ground ;
 All His hosts have attacked like besiegers a foe,
 400 They prevent my retreat me His archers surround. 11-13

S.397. Obviously the poet knew the fable of the phoenix but here the idea is not that the phoenix is an emblem of immortality — for that idea belongs to the later mystic symbolism — but of prolonged life on earth.

I have transferred C. 30 : 2-8 to C. 24 for the following reason :

" Vv. 2-8 appear to be an independent poem describing outcasts of the type sketched in C. 24 : 5-8 (or 12) and v. 1 (which is so very different in tone from Job's magnanimous words in C. 31) may have been added to introduce the passage." (McFadyen). I have omitted v. 1b altogether as a later gloss which is 'out of context.' The Hebrew text of 11b, 12 and 13 f. is very obscure. My stanzas represent fairly, I think, the consensus of view as to the meaning.

Through the breach like a swarm unrestrained they invade,
Through the ruins their rushing is headlong and loud :
All my honour is shaken by raid upon raid,
401 And my welfare is gone with the wind and the cloud. 14-15

So my soul with my sorrow is slipping away,
In the daytime my misery masters my mind ;
In the nighttime my bones are consumed with decay,
402 While the pain never ceases my body to grind. 16-17

I am worn to the bone by a dreadful disease,
All the skin on my body resembles my clothes.
The Almighty has plunged me in mire to my knees,
403 And reduced me to ashes and dust among foes. 18-19

“ O my God, when I cry Thou dost give no reply,
Thou art silent, no longer Thou carest for me.
The real cause of Thy wrath let me know ere I die !
404 From the weight of Thy hand how I long to be free ! 20-21

Thou dost lift and compel me to face a great blast,
And dost leave me to lie in the roar of the wind,
Well I know Thou wilt bring me to death at the last,
405 To the dwelling appointed for all of mankind.” 22-23

Yet a man who is sinking will stretch out his hand,
He will cry to be saved ere he drowns in the deep.
Is the soul of the needy not grieved in the land ?
406 Will a man in despair and in sorrow not weep ? 22-24

Oh so hot is my heart, it can find no repose !
For I looked for the light but instead I found gloom.
Now my misery daily confronts me and grows ;
407 How I long to be dead and to rest in the tomb ! 26-27

All my sorrow remains and I go unconsoled,
Like a jackal I howl when great hunger it pains,
Like a wolf of the pack in the winter's worst cold,
408 Like an ostrich I scream when attacked on the plains. 28-29

All my skin becomes black and it peels from my flesh,
 And the heat of my fever is burning my bones,
 So the sound of my lyre turns to mourning afresh,
 409 And the tune of my pipe is akin to my moans. 30-31

JOB : CHAPTER XXXI

Job's Final Challenge and Confession of Faith

In His scales let my God my whole character weigh ;
 To my innocent life He will then testify.
 He alone can discern the whole length of my way,
 410 And can number each step that I take till I die. 4 and 6

For a covenant strict did I make with mine eyes,
 Not to look with desire upon woman or maid.
 What would God me assign from His throne in the skies,
 411 What would God me allot, if in sin I had strayed ? 1-2

Without doubt all the suffering sinners receive,
 Without doubt the disaster the vicious endure ;
 For the sinner a man but not God can deceive ;
 412 Retribution awaits the corrupt and impure. 3

For adultery calls for a sentence severe,
 Which the judges impose for a serious crime :
 It destroys human rights of the near and the dear,
 413 'Tis a fire burning homes to destruction like lime. 11-12

S.409. Thy lyre is the harp and was used for both sacred and secular music. The pipe was probably the bag-pipe (see note to C. 21 : 12). Here as elsewhere the Book of Job is full of "the still sad music of humanity."

S.410. I have related vv. 4 and 6, Strahan, who suggests that v. 6 should come before v. 5, says that v. 6 makes "an admirable exordium to Job's magnificent *apologia pro vita sua*."

If my heart has been lured by a woman's fair face,
 If at night I did lurk at my neighbour's dark door,
 May another my wife from me steal and embrace,
 414 And let others regard her as merely a whore! 9-10

Never spurned I just claims which my servants had made,
 When they lodged a complaint, whether woman or man,
 For our Maker demands that we give each our aid;
 415 We are born in one way and must follow His plan. 13-15

I have never refused to assist the just poor,
 Never left the poor widow to weep and to pine,
 While to eat by myself I just could not endure,
 416 But the orphans with me were accustomed to dine. 16-17

Never saw I a man who was starving with cold,
 Or one greatly in need whether neighbour or foe,
 But I warmed him with wool from the sheep of my fold,
 417 Till he blessed me for help which I loved to bestow. 19-20

Yes, my dread of calamity made me obey,
 For I nothing could say if He rose to rebuke:
 No excuse could I make if He challenged my way.
 418 Unto Him as my Father He taught me to look. 14, 18 and 23

If an innocent man I have taken to law,
 And because I was certain the verdict to win,
 Let the blade of my shoulder be cut with a saw,
 419 And my arm be removed for committing such sin! 21-22

S.414. "Even Job's morale, though so high, is not the highest, just because no man can completely emancipate himself from the ideas of his age. As a punishment for conjugal infidelity, a conscience-stricken husband imprecated on himself a curse which would in reality fall almost entirely on his innocent and injured wife. When woman has absolutely equal rights with her husband, as she has in Christianity, such a penance becomes preposterous." (Strahan).

S.415 "No Greek could have written that. One of the very greatest of them argued that the slave was but the tool of his master."

(J. E. McFadyen: *The Message of Israel*, p. 278).

If my land could accuse me of theft and deceit,
 And its furrows complain of my ill-gotten gain,
 If its goodness I drained or my workers did cheat,
 420 May my crops be of thorns and of weeds of the plain ! 38-40

If with falsehood I walked or I hastened to fraud,
 If control of my heart by mine eyes was complete,
 If my steps ever swerved from the way of my God,
 421 If my hands were besmirched with a spot of deceit ; 5, 7-8

If I placed all my trust upon gold that was fine,
 Or my confidence put upon silver or dress,
 If I said " By my hand many riches are mine,
 422 So my life is enjoyment of things I possess." 24-25

If I looked at the sun at its rising so bright,
 At the moon and the stars in their beauty on high,
 And like pagans adored them as idols of light,
 423 By my wafting a kiss with my hand to the sky ; 26-27

If I ever rejoiced at an enemy's fall,
 Or when ill overtook him was glad in my heart,
 If great curses on him I did secretly call,
 424 And I hoped very soon he from life might depart ; 29-30

If a stranger I suffered to sleep in the streets,
 Or my door I did close in his face when he came,
 If my servants could say ' he exploits and he cheats,'
 425 If my treatment of all was not just and the same ; 31-32

If my sin, in the way of the world, I concealed,
 Or I ever was silent when right was at stake ;
 If the public opinion e'er forced me to yield,
 426 Or in safety I stayed in my house for its sake ; 33-24

S.423. This form of idolatry was called Zabianism and was derived from Assyria in the time of Manasseh (2 K. 21 : 3).

If these things I had done, I had sinned against God,
 And might look to receive all the punishment due,
 But I tell you I stand underneath His great rod,
 427 Though not guilty of sins either many or few! 28

How I long for my Maker to hearken to me,
 For my signature seals my appeal at His throne,
 I beseech the Almighty to answer my plea,
 428 For He knows my whole life and that I am His own. 35 a and b

If Accuser in writing the charge lets me know,
 Which as placard or crown I am ready to wear,
 Like a prince I will enter his presence and show,
 429 That the steps of my life have been righteous and fair.
 35 (c) 36-37

So the words of good Job in defence were complete

"From the poem itself it is very evident that the hero of it had no supernatural and miraculous revelation of the will of God. That Job cannot see God nor hear His voice; that he cannot get at the Divine Meaning of his terrible afflictions, is the burden of his complaint — a complaint which grows ever more piercing as the story sweeps on to its close. It is free throughout from a single reference to any scripture or to any form of worship which obtained among the Jews. All that Job knew of God and His will he had learned from tradition, from the developed and inherited conceptions of the human mind. He answers one condition of our problem then; he has no revelation. Has he also a pure and noble morality? In the whole range of literature there is no more beautiful description of human goodness than we have in the chapters in which Job describes his manner of life before all the winds of heaven conspired to shatter his fortunes and to strip him of whatever he held honourable and dear. Did his pure morality content him? Did he feel that it met and satisfied every craving of his spirit, so that he lacked nothing? Why, the whole poem is a piercing outcry for that very Revelation which modern Scepticism pronounces superfluous, and reached its only natural close in an immediate manifestation of God to the soul of the afflicted patriarch."

— Carpus: "*Morality versus Revelation.*"

(The Expositor, Third Series, Vol. I, p. 481).

PART FOUR

THE BOOK OF JOB

Chapters 32 to 37 inclusive

Elihu's Interpretation of Job's Sufferings (C. 32—C. 37)

- So the words which were spoken by Job were complete,
And Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar said naught,
For they felt he was full of pretence and conceit ;
430 When he simply rejected the doctrine they taught. 1
- Now Elihu the son of Barachel of Buz,
Of the kindred of Ram was inflamed with great wrath,
Against Job the great man of the country of Uz,
431 Who had dared to maintain he had kept the straight path. 2
- But his anger extended to each of the three,
Who no answer had made to the man they condemned,
So he said " The great duty is resting on me,
432 To refute all his words which so greatly offend." 3 and 5
- Then Elihu declared, " I am younger than you,
Who are aged and therefore believed to be wise,
So in silence I listened not stating my view,
433 Lest conceited and pert I should seem in your eyes. 4, 6-7
- It is God who inspires men the truth to declare,
The Almighty who gives understanding to man,
When my mind is so full and so stirred I must share
434 What I know to be true about God and His plan. 8, 17-18
- For not always are aged judicious and wise :
As I heard all you said in your answers to Job,
And considered your reasons in all your replies,
435 I discovered not one could his arguments probe. 9, 11-12

C. 32 — C. 37. While I agree that Elihu's speeches are almost certainly a much later addition to the Book of Job — and an addition which mars the dramatic transition from the end of Job's words to the words of the Almighty (C. 38) *where these words are held to be addressed to Job*, yet I include these chapters here because I agree with Gregory and many later critics that the Almighty's challenge is directed not only to Job but to the friends and to Elihu, though the questions are asked of Job.

- You may readily say " We have found him too smart :
Only God and not man can his cunning defeat."
No encounter as yet has he had with my art :
436 You will find that my answers are new and complete. 13-14

- Like new wine without vent are the thoughts in my mind,
I must open my mouth and express them in speech,
By my words for myself some relief I must find,
437 And some wisdom to Job I must venture to teach. 17, 19-20

- Must I wait while you stand there confounded and mute,
Till you find some more reasons to give in reply ?
Not at all ! I must speak and go straight to the root.
438 What most needs to be said you will hear me supply. 15-16, 18

- Without bias am I in all things that I teach,
And no flattering words will I speak to a man,
I refuse to employ any simpering speech,
439 Or my Maker would soon put an end to my span. 21-22

JOB : CHAPTER XXXIII

- Now O Job hear my speech and give ear to my voice,
And behold how I open my lips to make clear,
For my tongue utters words, even words that are choice,
440 And my heart, like my mouth is unfeigned and sincere. 1-3

- Like a man take your stand and reply if you can.
Before God we are equal and fashioned of clay,
And His breath is our life, in His image as man,
441 We are made by His Spirit and live to this day. 4-6

Some opinions about Elihu :—

" A type of the foolish and arrogant teachers in the Church." (*Gregory the Great*).

" A representative of the foes of the Church of Christ." (*Bede*).

" A babbling stream to be passed by without notice." (*Ewald*).

- So no fear of myself should occasion dismay,
 For my speech will not lay on you strictures severe.
 What I ask is attention to all that I say,
 442 That the truth you may learn and that God you may fear. 7
- Now I heard you maintain "I am blameless and just,
 And yet God me afflicted with pain and great loss.
 Though in Him, as He knows, I have placed all my trust,
 443 He compels me to suffer by bearing my cross. 8
- Both my feet, like a thief's in the stocks He has set,
 He is watching me well lest my freedom I gain.
 When to Him I appeal I no justice can get,
 444 He is silent and hidden from men in their pain." 11-12
- Why complain that no answer He gives to your cry ?
 The Almighty one manner of speaking employs,
 And another if man does not heed or reply.
 445 What He speaks in both manners He never destroys. 13-14
- In a dream, first of all, in a vision of night,
 When deep sleep falls on man as he lies on his bed
 His great warnings He gives both by word and by sight,
 446 That His law he may keep and that God be his dread. 15-16
- So He chastens man's pride and He leads him aright,
 And from death he is saved and his soul from the pit ;
 But if heedless of warnings he turns from the light,
 447 Then He speaks by His rod till he learns to submit. 17-18

S.444. V. 12b — the meaning on emending the Hebrew text. Cf. Moffatt, McFadyen and Strahan.

S.445. The meaning of the Hebrew of v. 14b is doubtful. I adopt the view of McFadyen and Duhm that it is "He doth not revoke it."

S.446. V. 15b Cf. Ellphaz C. 4 : 13b. I Sam. 28 : 15 ; Enoch 83 : 83-90.

- Then a man is confined to his bed in great pain,
 All his bones are benumbed and he turns from his food ;
 Even daintiest dishes declines with disdain,
 448 Then his body grows lean and his bones all extrude. 19-21
- So his life hangs in doubt on the brink of the grave,
 And the angels of death are not far from his soul ;
 But his guardian angel then comes him to save,
 449 One of God's thousand angels His name who extol. 22-23
- All his sins and his faults to the man he reveals,
 Then in pity he prays that his life may be spared :
 "To the pit let his soul not go down," he appeals,
 450 For the price have I found, for his soul have I cared." 23b-24
- Then his flesh is renewed like the flesh of a boy,
 He returns to the strength of the days of his youth,
 Unto God does he pray with acceptance and joy,
 451 All His will he obeys both in spirit and truth. 25-26
- So the story he tells is how God him did save
 His great name he adores and to others declares :
 "I had sinned and had wandered as wild as the wave,
 452 But from death He me saved : Praise the Lord who men spares ! " 27
- "Yes, He ransomed my soul from the pow'r of the grave,
 He allowed me to live in the light of His love."
 Thus again and again the Almighty doth save,
 453 Doth deliver from death to His sunshine above. 28-30

S.449. 'Guardian Angel' literally 'Interpreter' which the Targum translates by a word which means 'Comforter' which later became one of the names of the Holy Spirit.

S.450. No other 'ransom' is intended here than the man's repentance or (less probably) his affliction (Cf. C. 36 : 18 and Strahan's note).

S.451 f. This little psalm has been much admired by the commentators.

S.453. "Freut sich des Lichtes" (*Duhm*).

"Darf am Licht sich weiden." (*Budde*).

Be attentive O Job to the words that I speak,
 Be thou silent and think of the things I have said,
 Then if aught would you say, make reply for I seek,
 454 From reproach you to clear and to lift up your head. 31-33

JOB : CHAPTER XXXIV

To the friends said Elihu " O Sages give ear,
 For the mind is a tester of wrong and of right,
 Like the palate which makes the true taste to appear.
 455 Let us learn to distinguish the darkness from light. 1-4

Now consider that Job makes a claim to be just,
 That the Lord has rewarded him evil for good :
 " For a liar I pass though in God do I trust,
 456 He afflicts me past cure though for justice I stood." 5-6

Do you know such a man as this Job who despairs,
 Who like men drinking water so scoffingly talks,
 Who in league with the sinners and wicked declares :
 457 " It is vain when a man with his God truly walks." 7-9

As intelligent men you will listen to sense.
 Let it be far from God to do evil or wrong !
 On each man for his work He bestows recompense,
 458 He must reap what he sows be it sorrow or song. 10-11

Any wrong most assuredly God cannot do
 The Almighty perverts not His justice and right.
 Who entrusted the earth to His charge and purview ?
 459 Who consigned the whole world to His wisdom and might ? 12-13

S.459. This is one of the most striking passages in the O.T. in which both the transcendence and immanence of God are asserted. It is on the basis of this ' theology ' that the case is argued for the enduring justice and mercy of God. Job also sets forth this argument (Cf. C. 10 : 8-12). Cf. Tennyson—" Thou madest man, he knows not why
 Thou hast made him, Thou art just."

Both His heart and His hand are on men and the world ;
 If His Spirit withdrew or He gathered His breath,
 Then to chaos the whole human race would be hurled,
 460 To the dust would return in the valley of death. 13b-15

Now if wise you will hear and my words understand.
 Could the Maker of all ever govern this globe,
 If to justice opposed both in heart and in hand ?
 461 But this justice of God is disputed by Job ! 16-17

Do you censure the God who is Justice and Might ?
 Who addresses a king : " You are villain and knave ?"
 Who denounces a noble : " You infamous wight ?"
 462 Who as strongly can smite as He strongly can save ? 17-18

Who no favour will show to the princes and kings,
 Who regards not the rich any more than the poor,
 For the work of His hands are all men and all things,
 463 In a moment they die and not one can endure. 19-20a

Thus the wealthy are seized without warning and die ;
 In mysterious manners the mighty are moved,
 For the ways of all men are exposed to His eye,
 464 All the steps of their lives by His scrutiny proved. 20-21

In no darkness or shadow sufficiently deep,
 Can the workers of wrong be secluded and live,
 So He needs no assizes to fix and to keep,
 465 Any facts to produce, any justice to give. 22-23

S.463. By a slight emendation of the Hebrew text the reading ' rich ' instead of ' people ' is obtained.

S.464. Cf. Daniel 2 : 34.

S.465. " Most of the verses from this point (v. 23) to the end of the chapter are extremely obscure. The text is highly uncertain and the translation largely conjectural." (*McFadyen*).

Without trial He shatters the wealthy and strong,
To their places permits other men to succeed,
He well knows what they are, how they live to do wrong,
466 In a night they are crushed, to their works He gives heed. 24-25

For their sins in the presence of men them He smites,
They are killed by their crimes and they sow what they reap.
For they turned from His path and denied the just rights,
467 Of the poor whom in hunger and pain they did keep. 26-27

The oppressed and the poor unto God made appeal,
And He heard their sad cries in their want and distress.
If He silent remained who injustice would feel ?
468 If His face He withdrew, who would look for redress ? 28-29

Upon nations and men His great providence rests,
And whatever they do is disclosed to His eye.
He will punish a king who the people molests,
469 For His ear ever hears their lament and their cry. 30

Now O Job make confession and promise to mend
"I have sinned in the past and will do so no more,
I have suffered for sin and no more will offend,
470 Do Thou teach me Thyself what I tend to ignore." 31-32

Will He change His requital your wishes to meet,
When He sees you reject as severe His award ?
You yourself must decide what reply is most mete,
471 To the question "Am I with my God in accord ?" 33

All intelligent men will admit I am right,
All the wise who are hearing the words that I speak,
That what Job has declared is devoid of the light ;
472 It reveals that his knowledge and insight are weak. 34-35

S.472. Strahan has made the fitting comment —

"At the bar of Rabbinism, the hero of the poem is condemned. But time has its strange revenges. Rabbinism and its works are forgotten or remembered only by those who are themselves more or less Rabbis, while the book which enshrines the questionings and faith of Job lives for ever. History presents many parallels. The 'Immortals' of the French Academy had no place in their ranks for Moliere ; but the tables are turned, and he is Immortal. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum.*"

- O that Job might be tried for his sins to the end !
 When rebuked for his sins all his answers are vain.
 He increases his guilt by refusal to mend :
 473 Against God he continues to speak and complain. 36-37

JOB : CHAPTER XXXV

- Then Elihu declared " Do you think this is just ?
 Do you say it is right before God and His law,
 To enquire " What advantage is mine when I trust,
 474 And what good do I get if from sin I withdraw ?" 1-3

- Hear my answer to you and to each of your friends :
 Lift your eyes to the heavens and clouds overhead.
 Can your sin ever injure the God it offends ?
 475 At your many misdeeds does He feel any dread ? 4-6

- By your righteousness, goodness and truth does He gain ?
 From your conduct and deeds does He benefit draw ?
 No, your sin but affects a mere mortal with pain,
 476 Your good conduct concerns only man and his law. 7-8

- When oppressed men will cry for relief from their pain,
 To be free from the arm of the tyrant or foe,
 But who says " Where is God, my exceeding great gain,
 477 Who gives songs in the night to the man full of woe ?" 9-10

S.475-476. This merely repeats the argument of Eliphaz in C. 22 (Cf. S. 305).

S.477. " It is not a cry for God but only for release from pain." (*McFadyen*).

" Elihu is less an individual student of the ways of God than an exponent of the tendencies of an age with a mind—

" Whose fancy fuses old and new,
 And flashes into false and true,
 And mingles all without a plan."

So versatile a guide compels all his readers to be eclectics." (*Strahan*).

For He gives us more knowledge than beasts can possess,
 Yea, more wisdom and light than the birds of the air,
 Therefore God will not listen when men in distress,
 478 Are complaining like Job that their God does not care. 11-13

How much less will He listen when Job interjects,
 "The Almighty I see not, I wait but in vain."
 O be still and be patient! He justly corrects,
 479 Nor ignores all the sin not rewarded with pain. 14-16

JOB : CHAPTER XXXVI

Then Elihu declared "If you wait a short time,
 I will show that for God I have something to say,
 And my knowledge will cull from each country and clime,
 480 I will justify Him in His dealings and way." 1-3

For my words are not false but with truth are replete,
 They are spoken O Job you to save from despair.
 I am standing before you in knowledge complete
 481 All the words I am speaking are honest and fair. 4

Now behold the Almighty the stubborn disdains,
 And the wicked will never ignore or condone.
 All the rights of the wretched and wronged He regains,
 482 From the just He withdraws not the things that they own. 5-6

It has happened to kings, when elated with pride,
 That in chains they were bound and in fetters of shame,
 That their crimes were exposed when they rose like the tide,
 483 All their sins and revolt against Him and His name. 7-9

S.482. The translations of v. 5f in A.V., Ewald and R.S.V. are in substantial agreement but differ completely from those of Moffatt, McFadyen and Duhm. I adopt here the view of the latter.

He compelled them to hear His instruction and right ;
Of their sins and transgressions He bade them repent.
If they heard and obeyed and returned to the light,
484 Then the rest of their years were in happiness spent. 10-11

But if not then they came to a violent end ;
Without knowledge they went to the land of the blind,
Being godless at heart and resolved to offend,
485 They refused to repent when by sickness confined. 12-13

So they died in their youth, in disgrace and in shame,
Yea they perished like men who by vice are depraved.
But He saves all who suffer yet praise His great name,
486 Through their losses they listen to what they had waived. 14-15

But your prosperous, painless, and privileged life,
Has beguiled you with ease and the richest of food,
The full fate you now meet of the children of strife,
487 In the grasp of His judgment you writhe for your good. 16-17

Let not chastisement make you resentful and proud,
Nor the ransom of pain be considered too great.
Would your wealth alone save though as high as the cloud ?
488 Would your strength alone serve His great wrath to placate ? 18-19

Let not folly delude you and render you vain,
That you rival the men in conceit who are wise.
O beware lest you fall into sin once again !
489 Rather suffer than sin for on you are His eyes. 20-21

S.487. "A hopelessly obscure verse (v. 16)." (*McFadyen*).

S.488 - S.489. "These verses (18-20) are hopelessly difficult and obscure. The ransom is the suffering to be endured, and the intensity of it is not to deflect Job., i.e., turn him aside from paying it." (*McFadyen*).

Lo the Lord is exalted supreme in His might.
Is a teacher like Him to be found in the land ?
Who will venture to teach Him the way that is right,
490 Or Him call to account for the deeds of His hand ? 22-23

So remember to praise the great Maker of all,
For the things which the poets have painted in song,
Which all men in the world with great pleasure recall,
491 Though they see from afar how all things do belong. 24-25

For behold ! The Almighty is great beyond ken,
The whole tale of His years far exceeds human reach.
He disperses His rain upon meadow and ben,
492 Even moisture withdrawn from the sea and the beach. 26-27

He distils from His clouds both the dew and the rain,
On the people He causes His showers to fall.
Who can tell how He fashions the clouds once again ?
493 How He thunders from heaven in peals that appal. 28-29

Who can tell how He spreads His great clouds in the sky ?
How the tops of the mountain He covers with mist ?
How the nations He feeds with abundant supply ?
494 How the earth with His beauty and goodness is kissed ? 30-31

Who can tell how He speaks from pavilions of cloud,
How He hurls from His hand the great flash to its mark ?
He announces His coming with thunder most loud,
495 His great wrath is aroused by iniquity dark. 32-33

S.490. These verses read like pale echoes of the divine speech which follows in C. 38f. This is only one of several indications that the speech of Elihu is of a much later date than the original book of Job.

JOB : CHAPTER XXXVII

Does His thunder not cause you to tremble with fear ?
 Does your heart not appear to be moved to your mouth ?
 To His voice, O give ear, which is sounding so clear,
 496 To the roar of the tempest from North or from South ! 1-2

For the peals of His thunder resound in the sky,
 His bright flashes are filling the firmament's fringe
 In the wake of the lightning His voice from on high
 497 Is majestic in pow'r causing mortals to cringe. 3-4a

When the roll of the thunder is heard in the storm,
 He restrains not the lightning o'er mountains and plains.
 Many wonders He shows, mighty acts He performs,
 498 Far exceeding our knowledge and reach of our brains. 4b-5

He commands both the snow and the rain to descend,
 So that many are forced to remain within door,
 To acknowledge and fear His great might and attend
 499 To the judgments and laws He has given of yore. 6-7

In their lairs and their dens even beasts will remain,
 When the storms from the South are approaching the land,
 When the cold from the North is forthcoming again,
 500 Well they know that the tempests they cannot withstand. 8-9

By the breath of His mouth come the frost and the snow
 The great lakes quickly freeze and the clouds muster hail,
 In the sky there is lightning which darts to and fro,
 501 As He orders and drives it the world to assail. 10-12

Therefore hearken, O Job, recollect and be wise ;
 Then consider how God all these wonders displays.
 In correcting or cursing all guilty of lies,
 502 Or in mercy promoting His glory and praise. 13-14

Do you know how the clouds are suspended on high,
 How He pours down a flood when He thunders in might,
 Why your clothes become hot when Sirocco is nigh,
 503 How He darkens the sky and then flashes the light ? 15-17

Or like Him can you spread out the sky like a glass,
 Like a mirror of silver all gleaming and blue,
 Or all yellow and bright like a platter of brass,
 504 Or all mixed like a rainbow of various hue ? (18 elaborated)

Can you tell what to God we can say or declare,
 When we argue and speak while our minds are so blind ?
 Shall we cavil at Him with whom none can compare,
 505 Shall we say that He errs when He deals with mankind ? 19-20

For a man cannot gaze upon yon shining sphere,
 When with brightness so dazzling from heaven it beams,
 When the wind makes its face free from cloud and all clear,
 506 When from skies in the North the bright radiance streams.
 21-22a

8.504. In the ancient Hebrew cosmogony, the sky was regarded as a *solid* expanse — hence the name 'firmament' — beaten out like a brass plate or made of iron or glass. (Cf. Deut, 28 : 23).

But the splendour of God is more awful than light,
 The Almighty in glory transcends our small mind :
 He is rich in His justice and peerless in might,
 507 He will never infringe any right of mankind. 22b-23

For this cause we should fear Him and praise His great name
 All our pride we should leave nor complain of distress.
 For a heart of conceit is a heart full of blame.
 508 He regards not the proud but the meek He will bless. 24

Commenting on Elihu's interpretation of suffering, Prof. J. E. McFadyen wrote :—

" There are none of those inimitable glimpses into the benevolence which is there seen to irradiate the world. . . . There is Power and there is Justice ; but where is Love ? Elihu had seen it upon the sick bed (C. 33 : 19f), but he does not see it, as the speeches of the Almighty reveal it, in the universe. There is here the same philosophical failure as we noted before in his inability to combine the transcendent and the immanent — the failure to see the world as one. And this is only part of his failure to understand Job and the writer of the original book ; for while that great genius accords to Job the honour of a theophany, Elihu can only end with the ominous warning that God gives no heed to those who, like Job, dare to criticise the system under which they live. God will ignore such, says Elihu : " God in His glory will appear," says the older and greater poet. It is the difference between mediocrity and originality, between convention and inspiration." (*The Problem of Pain*, p. 268).

PART FIVE

THE BOOK OF JOB

Chapters 38 to 42 : 6

The Divine Challenge

- Then the Lord unto Job from the whirlwind replied :
 " Who my justice disputes and distorts my design,
 With a cloud of wild words has my goodness denied ?
 509 Let him hearken to me and my challenge divine. 1 2
- Like a man be prepared me to face and reply,
 To the questions I ask give your answers profound.
 Let the minds of all men, who well know they must die,
 510 Be attentive to me ere they utter a sound. 3
- Where were you when I founded the earth and the sea,
 When all things in this world out of nothing I made ?
 From the depths of your knowledge declare unto me,
 511 All your insight reveal and the part that you played. 4
- Can you fathom the wisdom which made this great sphere,
 Or discern who its measures determined exact ?
 Did some builder with line and a plummet appear,
 512 Its dimensions to fix and to make it intact ? 5
- Were its pedestals fastened secure with a ring ?
 Do you know who positioned its great cornerstone,
 When in concert the stars of the morning did sing,
 513 When for joy all the angels sweet songs did intone ? 6-7
- When I swathed the great turbulent sea with dense cloud,
 When I swaddled with darkness the face of the deep,
 When it roared at its birth from wild chaos so loud,
 514 Who with doors it confined its fixed limits to keep ? 8-9

3.509 f. It is generally agreed that this part of the Book of Job followed C. 31. Job's friends had darkened counsel and it is to them that the challenge divine is mainly directed (Cf. Bradley, op. cit. 316). Job had said " Call Thou and I will answer." (C. 13 : 22).

Did I need any helper to bolt and to bar
 All the boundaries fixed by my word and decree,
 When I said to the sea "You may travel thus far,
 515 But no further proud waves are permitted to be?" 10-11

Have you ever commanded the morn in the night,
 The new dawn and the sun to appear ere their hour,
 All the wicked in darkness to frighten by light
 516 Which illumines the earth like a beam from a tow'r? 12-13

Then the earth is portrayed like the mark of a seal,
 Its whole shape and its colours are seen like a gown,
 While the thieves are deprived of the time when they steal,
 517 And the arms they uplifted they drop with a frown. 14-15

Have you entered the springs of the fathomless sea?
 Have you walked in recesses of darkening deeps?
 Have the gates of dread death been revealed unto thee?
 518 Have you seen the pale porter who safely them keeps? 16-17

Can you claim to have measured the surface of earth,
 To have rested your eyes upon all to be seen?
 Do you know how to go to the light's place of birth,
 519 To the dwelling of darkness in earth's furthest scene? 18-19

Can you trace both the darkness and light to their bounds?
 Can you make them retire to the place where they dwell?
 Peradventure you know all the sights and the sounds,
 520 And how great is your age not a person can tell! 20-21

8.513. Cf. Ezra 3: 10-11; Shakespeare: "The Merchant of Venice," Act I, Sc. 1; Milton: Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity, lines 117-119.

"It was a Pythagorean notion that a music of the spheres, imperceptible to the human ear, was produced by the motion of the heavenly bodies; whence Goethe's 'In Bruderspharen Wettgesang.'" (Strahan).

8.519. According to primitive cosmology, Light and Darkness were regarded as existing apart from the heavenly bodies.

8.520. Cf. C. 15: 7.

Have you entered the stores of the blizzards and snows,
Or the arsenals mighty of thundering hail,
Which I keep for the days of distress and wild woe,
521 For the storms and the tempests which strike like a flail ? 22-23

Who has cleft in the sky the great channels for rain ?
Who prevents all the torrents from drowning the world ?
Who releases the lightning which flashes amain ?
522 Who the thunderbolt causes from clouds to be hurled ? 25

On the desolate land who has scattered the rain,
On the deserts so barren where man cannot dwell ?
Who enriches with verdure the field and the plain,
523 Making bud and green herb to appear in the dell ? 26-27

In what way do the mists thickly gather on high,
And disperse giving dew to the dry thirsty ground ?
Can you tell how the light is so dimmed in the sky,
524 As to cause a great storm from the East to resound ? 24 and 27

Do the rain and the dew for a father man own ?
Have the ice and the hoar-frost a mother below,
When the water is frozen as hard as a stone,
525 And the face of the deep wears a garment of snow ? 28-30

Can you gather the Pleiades seven in one ?
Can you loosen the chains which Orion doth wear,
Or direct the great Zodiac's path round the sun,
526 Or control all the stars in the group of the Bear ? 31-32

S.521. Cf. Jos. 10 : 11 ; Isaiah 3 : 30 ; Psalm 18 : 12.

S.522. There was supposed to be a *solid canopy* or firmament over the earth through which were cut great channels to permit the waters ('space') to come through.

S.526. vv. 31-32. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

- Were the laws of the heavens the work of your hands ?
 Are you perfect in knowledge and wisdom and might ?
 Do you know all the laws of the earth as it stands,
 527 All complete in its wonders of darkness and light ? 33
- Can you lift up your voice to the clouds overhead,
 And demand that they drop an abundance of rain ?
 Can you send forth the lightning by nodding your head ?
 528 Does it say " Here am I, your obedient swain." 34-35
- Have celestial bodies been given by man,
 All their movements and order in time and in space ?
 Were the wisdom and might which have fashioned the plan,
 529 The possessions of one of this weak human race ? 36
- Can you point to the man who can number the clouds ?
 Who can tilt all these pitchers to moisten the soil,
 When the ground is as hard as if trodden by crowds,
 530 When the clods remain solid increasing man's toil ? 37-38
- Can you hunt like the lion the prey as the food,
 Which his mate and his cubs in the even await,
 As they crouch in their den or in covert or wood,
 531 That the pangs of their want they may quickly placate ? 39-40
- When the young of the raven are seeking their food,
 When they cry unto God for the boon that they need,
 Who provides for their wants and who gives what is good ?
 532 The Creator Almighty in word and in deed. 41

" If there is a real answer to the problem (of pain) anywhere in the book, one would naturally expect it to appear in the sublime speeches of Jehovah in chapters thirty-eight and thirty-nine. The first impression, however, produced by them upon our minds is one of surprise and disappointment. Job's hopeful upturned face is met by a pitiless hail of questions whose keen irony must have cut to the heart of the unhappy man. The questions too, seem little short of cruel, as they have nothing whatever to do with him or his grief, or even with human life at all ; they centre round the mysterious processes of nature—the steadiness of the earth, the movement of the sea, the invisible forces of the snow, the rain, the hail . . . in point of fact there are in this speech brilliant hints of a solution, though they do not lie upon the surface." (J. E. McFadyen : *The Message of Israel*, p. 233).

JOB : CHAPTER XXXIX

Do you know how the goats of the mountain can climb,
When the birth of their young is so near on the hill ?
Did you give them their instincts or limit the time,
533 Or determine the months which they have to fulfil ? 1-2

Do you know how the hinds can survive when they bear ?
Did you teach them to calve with much ease and great speed ?
Can you tell how they thrive in the keen mountain air ?
534 Why their young they forsake when beginning to feed ? 3-4

Who has loosened the bonds of the wild mountain ass,
That in freedom he roams without let or command ?
Why his days on the steppe has he chosen to pass ?
535 Why he dwells in the wastes of the barren salt-land ? 5-6

Why the crowds and the tumult of cities he scorns,
And traverses the range of the mountains and hills ?
The loud shouting of drivers and sounding of horns,
536 He avoids as he feeds in the heights by the rills. 7-8

Will the unicorn toil and remain in your stall ?
Can you harness him fast to the plough in your field ?
Will he harrow the furrows and answer your call,
537 Will he hear your commands and obedience yield ? 9-10

Will you trust His magnificent strength to fulfil,
Your own ends and expect him to labour and toil ?
Do you think he will tamely submit to your will,
538 Humbly carry your corn and your wine and your oil ? 11-12

According to Paxton's "Illustrations of Scripture" (Vol. I, p. 585 f) where interesting descriptions of all these creatures are to be found, the reference here is not to the mere natural facts which are well-known to shepherds and others but to the mystery of the instinctive behaviour of these animals in the face of dangers and difficulties.

8.537. The unicorn is probably the wild-ox or antelope.

Did you give to the peacock his beautiful sheen,
 To the ostrich her wings which she flaps in her pride,
 As she leaves all her eggs with indifferent mien,
 539 To the dust and the sunlight their fate to decide? 13-14

She is heedless of feet which may crush and destroy,
 Of the wandering beasts which may break and devour;
 No concern for her young whether sorrow or joy,
 540 Does she show, no regret though they die in an hour. 15-16

She is wholly devoid of all feeling and sense,
 In the greatest of dangers knows nothing of fear:
 When the hunters arrive she ignores all defence,
 541 And she laughs at the horses and riders and gear. 17-18

Did you give to the war-horse his strength and his mane,
 Which he shakes as he leaps like a locust in flight,
 While his nostrils are snorting with wrath and disdain,
 542 As he paws in the valley impatient for fight. 19-20

He is scornful of death, he is laughing at fear,
 As he gallops to conquer the threatening foe.
 No regard does he pay to the sword or the spear,
 543 Which attack him and rider above and below. 22-23

In his rage and his fierceness he swallows the ground,
 With his speed as he rushes to war on the fields,
 The far fight he can scent where the captains resound,
 544 All the tumult of war and the clashing of shields. 24-25

S.539. The Hebrew text is ambiguous: the meaning adopted above best suits the context. There is an Arabian proverb, "More foolish than an ostrich."

S.542. In Rev. 9: 7, locusts are compared to horses, but here the comparison is in reverse—a poetic touch on the part of the original poet-author of the Book of Job.

S.544. Referring to V. 24, Strahan quotes Virgil; Georgics 3: 32, "Tum si qua sonum procul arma dedere, Stare loco nescit."

At the sound of the trumpet he neighs with great rage,
 Then he gallops unswerving, refusing to stand,
 He is mad with desire the strong foe to engage,
 545 And to put him to flight and deliver the land. 25

By your wit does the hawk stretch her wings to the South ?
 At your word does the eagle encircle the sky ?
 Does she hearken to all that proceeds from your mouth,
 546 Before building her nest in the pinnacle high ? 26-27

There she dwells and remains in the calm and the storm
 From the crag and the peak she can search for the prey,
 With sharp eyes she observes any movement or form,
 547 Then she swoops to the kill like an arrow by day. 28-29

There her young imbibe blood and are taught how to fly ;
 There they dwell in the safety of perilous peaks,
 And wherever men fight and are wounded or die,
 548 There the eagle is found as her victim she seeks. 30

JOB : CHAPTER XL : 15-24

Behemoth

Now consider that Behemoth fashioned by me,
 Can eat grass like an ox though enormous in head,
 He has nostrils and muscles most wondrous to see,
 549 A thick tail like a cedar and heavy as lead. 15-17a

Explaining what he calls the "gusto" in the Book of Job, Gilfillan has observed : " You do something more than see his behemoth, his war-horse and his leviathan : you touch, smell, hear and handle them, too. It is no shadow of the object he sets before you but the object itself in its length, breadth, height and thickness. In this point he is the Landseer of ancient poetry and something more." (op. cit. p. 77).

Behemoth : Generally regarded as the Hippopotamus.

Job 40 : 15-24 is generally believed to be a much later addition to the original Book of Job.

S.548. Cf. Matthew 24 : 28 and Rev. 19 : 17-18.

All his bones are as strong as great pillars of brass,
 All his ribs and his limbs are like stanchions of stone :
 A gigantic strong creature which none can surpass,
 550 Yet so harmless to all who will leave him alone ! 17b-19

In the river and mountain he finds all his foods,
 All the beasts of the field are amazed at his bulk,
 As he lies in the shade by the lotus in woods,
 551 Or is resting at banks sound asleep like a hulk. 20-21a

In the coverts of reed and of fen he reclines,
 Or retreats to the thickets and willows all night,
 When the floods are arising he never repines,
 552 For he knows that the greatest of these he can fight. 21b-23a

In the swell of the river he fills his great throat,
 As if swallowing water were all his desire.
 Who would venture to fight him by land or by boat,
 553 Who can pierce his great nose with a rod or a wire ? 23b-24

JOB : CHAPTER XLI

Leviathan

Will Leviathan swallow a hook like a fish ?
 Can you angle for him with a line and a rod ?
 Can you tie down his tongue with a string when you wish,
 554 Or run cord through his nose as through gills of a cod ? 1-2

Will he come to your feet to present an appeal ?
 Will the words of his mouth be like butter or oil ?
 Can you lead him a contract to sign and to seal,
 555 To abide as your slave, to obey and to toil ? 3-4

Leviathan — The Crocodile.

Job C. 41. Likewise believed to be a later addition to the Book of Job.

- Will he dwell like a cat or a dog in your house?
 Can you make him submit by command or with praise,
 Like a pretty pet bird or performing white mouse,
 556 To amuse all your maids with his antics and ways? 5
- Can the fishermen catch him and take off his hide?
 Can they cut him in pieces and sell him for food?
 If you strike with a spear his hard head or his side,
 557 You have finished with fishing or fighting for good! 6-8
- Any hope of befriending this creature is vain,
 At the sight of his form all are stricken with fear,
 Any man who disturbs him n'er does so again,
 558 Even men who are brave do not wish to be near. 9-10
- Not a man is so bold as to touch him with hand,
 To attempt him to fight without weapon or rope.
 Who has braved with success this great creature on land?
 559 On the earth not a man of such triumph had hope. 11
- On his back he has scales each resembling a shield,
 They are set all in rows like an army for fight,
 And so closely are formed, so compactly are sealed,
 560 They exclude even air, being fastened with might. 12-17
- The light glints on his snout as he snorts on the deep,
 In the dark his red eyes are like beacons at night.
 From his mouth flames of fire seem to shoot and to leap,
 561 While his nostrils pour steam like a kettle shut tight. 18-21
- When they see this fierce beast all the animals flee,
 All brave men are alert for each swirl that he makes,
 He is strong in the neck, has a heart like a tree,
 562 The tough flesh of his body is covered with flakes. 22-25

All the weapons of war avail nothing at all :
 When one strikes with a dart or harpoon or a spear,
 It affects him no more than a blow on a wall,
 563 Or a straw which but tickles your neck or your ear. 26-28

The bronze lance is no better than cork or soft clay,
 The sharp arrow a toy which he tosses aside,
 While the stones from a sling are mere stubble or hay,
 564 Even bludgeons and spikes he can safely deride. 29-30

He is fond of reclining on banks of soft loam ;
 He can lie among rocks quite inert like a log,
 He can thrash with his tail the black water to foam,
 565 And can churn up the river like mud in a bog. 31

In the water he swims like an arrow in flight,
 And he leaves, like a ship a clear furrow in wake,
 He is king of all creatures, a harrowing sight ;
 566 He is fearless and fierce making animals quake. 32-34

JOB : CHAPTER XL : 6-14 AND

CHAPTER XLII : 1-6

The Almighty continued His challenge to Job :
 " Will a caviller carp at my perfect decree,
 And reprove all my dealings with man and the globe ?
 567 Let him know and recall he is speaking of Me ! 1-2 and 6

Will he question my justice and wisdom and might ?
 Will he doubt my compassion and goodness and grace ?
 Is a mortal and sinner to claim he is right.
 568 By asserting his reason and wit to my face ? 8

Are his arms and his fingers as mighty as mine ?
 Can he speak with an accent of thunder like me ?
 In that case let him dress in a fashion so fine,
 569 That it matches his splendour, his rank and degree ! 9-10

Let his greatness be seen by abolishing sin,
 By removing the evil, the wicked the proud !
 All alone let his hand the great victory win,
 570 And My praise of his powers will be lengthy and loud ! 11-14

JOB'S REPLY

At these words the meek Job before God was aghast,
 And confessed " I am small and imperfect and wrong.
 Nevermore will I speak as I did in the past,
 571 But of Thee O Almighty shall be my great song. C. 40 : 3-5

I admit there is nothing too hard for Thine arm,
 That no thought can be hidden from Thee and Thy light,
 I confess my confusion of thought but no harm,
 572 Did I mean when I spoke in my haste in my plight. C. 42 : 1-3

S. 571. " He said to himself, " Thus hath He decreed ; it is foolish to struggle against His ordinances ; we can but submit." " A poor Gospel," says his critic. Poor !— Yes, it may be ; but it is the Gospel according to Job . . . it is genuine ; and this at least must be said for Puritanism that of all the theologies and philosophies it is the most honest in its recognition of the facts ; the most real, if we penetrate to the heart of it, in the remedy which it offers." (Mark Rutherford : *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane*, p. 127).

JOB : CHAPTER XLII : 3-6

Understanding I lacked of Thy wisdom and ways,
 When I spoke of Thy wonders sublime beyond ken.
 I had heard but by hearsay of Thee and Thy praise ;
 573 Now I see and repent O Thou Maker of men ! 3, 5-6

Strahan's comment on the divine challenge in Job C. 40 : 6-14 is excellent and relevant :—

“ Men have often imagined how they would transform the world if they had the power.

“ Ah Love ! could thou and I with fate conspire
 To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
 Would not we shatter it to bits — and then
 Re-mould it nearer to the heart's desire ? ”

(*Omar Khayyam*).

‘ If I were God ’ is the introduction to many a visionary's sketch of a better and happier world. But with a wonderfully daring stroke of fancy, the writer of Job represents God as taking the initiative and inviting man's co-operation in the government of the world, if not as offering to abdicate in his favour. There is a somewhat similar irony in the Greek story of Phaeton who obtained his father's leave to drive the chariot of the sun for a day and nearly set the world on fire.”

W. R. Inge has summed up the message of the Book of Job thus : “ It is part of the greatness of the poem that, apart from the Epilogue (42 : 7-17) which was part of the old popular story, there is no conclusion except that in trouble man must not lose humility, faith and trust in God.” (*Every Man's Bible*, p. 89).

THE EPILOGUE

THE BOOK OF JOB

Chapter 42 : 7-17

So when God all these things unto Job had declared,
To Eliphaz He said, " You have stirred up my wrath,
By not speaking the truth about me ; you have dared
574 To accuse the good Job of forsaking my path. 7

Now then take, I command, in atonement for sin,
Seven bullocks and rams and an offering make,
And if Job intercedes, you my favour shall win ;
575 I will pardon you all for his righteousness's sake. 8

So Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar obeyed,
And then Job interceded that they be forgiv'n.
The Almighty then pardoned the friends when they prayed,
576 And Job's lot He reversed by a fiat from heav'n. 9-10

For He granted him double of all of his loss ;
His old friends and his brothers and sisters condoled
And their comfort bestowed for the weight of the cross
577 Which the Lord had imposed on His servant of old. 11

So they gave him a ring of the purest of gold,
And a piece of their money in token of good,
And they dined in his house as in banquets of old,
578 He enjoyed the best health and abundance of food. 11

This Epilogue is in *prose* in Hebrew. The feeling that this Epilogue represents a kind of bathos on the ground that it suggests that Job's double prosperity represents the same utilitarian position held by his friends in the traditional orthodox doctrine of retribution, is set aside by Froude who finds here that the blessings 'are bestowed on Job,' because he had ceased to need them.' Smend finds here that 'the Epilogue signifies nothing . . . the poet's hands were tied by the traditional form of the Job Saga.' (Cf. Strahan).
"There is spiritual insight as well as poetic justice in the Epilogue." (J. E. McFadyen : *The Message of Israel*, p. 239).

He received twice as much as he ever possessed,
 And the size of his family was fully repaired,
 His three daughters with beauty and riches were blessed,
 579 And the right to inherit they equally shared. 12-15

And so Job from all ills of this life was set free,
 And he lived after this during seven score years,
 Even four generations was granted to see,
 580 Then he died praising God who had saved him from fears. 16-17

"Job had been the great heretic challenging their truisms with a vehemence that savoured often of impiety and bordered once or twice upon blasphemy; yet it is he, and not they, who comes out of the conflict with the seal of the divine approval. It is easy to see where the sympathies of the writer lie. He is saying as plainly as words can put it, that the God in whom he believes, the God of his hero, is on the side of honest, fearless, even daring enquiry; that the frankly critical discussion of beliefs universally held by the contemporary church is no crime; that the challenge of the most venerable religious opinions is no impiety. Nay more, he is saying that the discussions may themselves even be brilliant contributions to a larger truth; may do the world an infinitely deeper religious service than blind adherence to an orthodoxy, which only remains orthodoxy so long as it is not effectively challenged; and that, if uttered by a man like Job, with his passion for God and for truth, they are peculiarly well-pleasing to God, who is honoured by the active and not by the stagnant mind." (McFadyen, *The Problem of Pain*, 243).